A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION INTO THE ADJUSTMENT TO UNIVERSITY OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE RELATIVE ADJUSTMENT OF BLACK STUDENTS

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Justin Sennett

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ABSTRACT

The change from school to university is a major life transition to which many students experience considerable difficulty in adjusting. This process of adjustment is multidimensional, requiring that students develop effective strategies for adapting to a host of new demands (Baker & Siryk, 1989) including those found in the academic, social and emotional spheres of development. Yet, in addition to factors relating to individual developmental or background variables, the interactive effects of student demographics and institutional environment may also influence a student's ability to cope effectively with adjustment to university. This may be the case particularly for students of disadvantaged or minority backgrounds, of which, the literature suggests, black African students in South Africa are a likely instance.

Three hundred and thirty-nine first-year students, drawn from three faculties of the University of Cape Town (UCT), completed the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (Baker & Siryk, 1989), which assesses a student's self-reported appraisal of the effectiveness with which he or she is adapting to university, as well as a questionnaire eliciting demographic information and data relating to further dimensions of adjustment. Data was analysed using independent t-test analysis, analysis of variance and chi-square analysis.

Results indicated that black subjects reported significantly poorer levels of social adjustment than did white subjects, with a tendency also to report poorer levels of personal-emotional adjustment. No significant differences between black and white subjects were detected on indices of academic adjustment or institutional commitment. Significant effects on various dimensions of adjustment were also found to be related to the particular course of study from which subjects of different 'races' were drawn. The variables, gender, age and subjects' first-language, were found to relate significantly to respective dimensions of adjustment, while adjustment was found not to be related to whether subjects were or weren't studying away from home or whether they had received prior exposure to multiracial schooling. Further findings examined the relationships

between adjustment and 'race' and additional aspects of university adjustment, such as estimated academic performance, whether subjects had reported having considered dropping out of university in the past year and whether subjects had reported having had a painful event or experience over the past year which had affected them negatively, as well as the relationships between these variables.

The implications of the results of this study are discussed and are related particularly to the role the university can play in facilitating holistic development and effective adjustment in its students.

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NOTE ON RACIAL CLASSIFICATIONS

This study utilises racial classifications in a way that may be found offensive, given South Africa's apartheid history. It should be noted, however, that such categorisation does not imply an acceptance of, or wish to perpetuate, politically constructed categories of identity. Racial classifications are used, paradoxically perhaps, to try to understand and possibly remedy the consequences of the socially constructed, politically motivated segregation imposed by apartheid.

During the years of apartheid, racial groupings were accorded many different labels, both by the system itself and by those being labelled. This study uses the terms 'black,' 'coloured,' 'Indian' and 'white' with the realisation that these terms are all historically loaded and contentious and may not be the terms of preference both for the participants in and readers of this research.

Chapter 1 : INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The present study constitutes a preliminary investigation into some of the dimensions of adjustment to university operating among first-year students at the University of Cape Town (UCT), with particular emphasis upon the relative adjustment of black African first-year students at the university. It was initiated on request from the principal psychologist at the UCT Student Health Service, and in conjunction with informal discussions with a number of UCT staff members involved in the formal academic teaching, academic development (i.e. programmes designed to assist students from disadvantaged academic backgrounds) and student development sectors of the university. The above were unanimous in identifying a need for research into the quality of adjustment to UCT experienced by black first-year students in particular, as these students' process of adjustment was perceived to pose greater (and less adequately understood) difficulties than that of other student groups at the university. The study was further motivated by recommendations for research into factors affecting adjustment contained in a recent study (Gelman, 1999) which found a positive relationship to exist between minor psychiatric morbidity and poor adjustment to university at UCT.

1.2 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter one provides a brief background to the study, followed by a review of literature pertinent to the areas under investigation. This review examines the developmental transition from school to university, with particular emphasis on issues of adjustment and adjustment problems as pertain to this. The paucity of research into adjustment problems in developing countries is then reviewed, followed by a discussion of the literature dealing with the adjustment problems of disadvantaged and, in particular, black students at South African universities. Literature addressing black students' experience of adjustment to campuses in the U.S.A. as well as that of the University of Cape Town is

then discussed, after which two perspectives on the nature of adjustment difficulties are compared, these being that relating to individual variables and that relating to the institutional environment and its impact on students.

Chapter two outlines the method of research. It considers such issues as research design and specifications of sampling, and provides an overview of the instrument used in the study. This includes the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) (Baker & Siryk, 1989), in terms of which issues relating to validity, reliability, interpretation and use, and limitations are also discussed. Methods of data collection are examined and ethical considerations and statistical analyses relating to the study discussed.

Chapter three describes the results of the study. These include descriptive statistics related to the SACQ, reports of the relationships between SACQ scores and socio-demographic (e.g. 'race' and gender), background (e.g. course of study) and academic variables, as well as of the relationships between dimensions of adjustment such as academic performance, whether subjects had had a painful event or experience during the past year which may have affected them negatively or had given thought to dropping out of university in the course of the year.

Chapter four summarises the main results obtained in the study. It further discusses some limitations associated with the research, before concluding with implications and recommendations based on the findings.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.3.1. THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO UNIVERSITY

Transitions in life involve periods of change, loss, or disruption of a prior structure or order in an individual's life (Compas, Wagner, Slavin & Vannatta, 1986). Although significant as part of processes of growth - and indeed often because of it, they frequently constitute highly stressful or distressing experiences. Fisher (1990) refers to various

theories to account for the distress following transitions, among these being the loss of an attachment experience, the interruption of lifestyle and attendant misattunement of old routines and new environment, the problem of reduced control or mastery over the psychosocial environment and the implications of role change for self-concept.

Research has suggested that, despite offering the potential for growth, the transitional stage of development from late adolescence to early adulthood is a particularly difficult one to negotiate (Cutrona, 1982). Specifically, the move from high school to university is a major life transition, requiring a young person to develop effective coping strategies in order to adapt to a variety of substantial new demands that are made on him or her. The process of adjusting to these demands, whether they be emotional, cognitive, social or academic, can be a source of considerable strain, and such times are likely to involve great risk and vulnerability. In fact, Compas, Wagner, Slavin and Vannatta (1986) suggest that so important a source of vulnerability to life events are such transitions, that the association of symptoms with prior life events is highest when students have recently entered a new school and living environment. It has been reported too that first-year students experience more adjustment problems than those in other academic years, including more disturbances in appetite, feelings of worthlessness, concentration problems, depression, and suicidal thoughts (Kashani & Priesmeyer, 1983, in Jay & D'Augelli, 1991).

The first year of university is often characterised by a stressful adjustment to unfamiliar expectations, values and behaviours as well as to the multiple and varied demands of a new social environment. When leaving home and entering university, many students live away from the emotional and social support of parents, family and community, as well as the familiarity of known surroundings. The loss of friendship networks and the support offered by these poses further sources of potential distress (Prout, 1993), and loneliness and isolation have been observed by Cutrona (1982) to be serious problems occurring in any first-year student population. Feelings of insecurity are probably also common when first confronted by the university milieu, and the acclimatisation to such a diverse, generally impersonal and potentially alien environment often requires the learning of a

range of new social and coping skills. Research has indicated too that difficulties with personal individuation, increased interpersonal conflicts and financial pressures are common first-year student experiences (Brooks & DuBois, 1995). Furthermore, being confronted by an unfamiliar academic situation with its new set of demands necessitates the acquisition of a new range of intellectual skills. In this regard, Agar (1990) has pointed out that the adjustment from the methods of teaching and learning most prevalent at school to those encountered at university poses a challenge to students universally.

Furthermore, in the same way that it has been documented that depression may have a negative influence on cognitive functioning, with symptoms including impairment in concentration and thinking (Kaplan, Sadock & Grebb, 1991), the transition to university is an experience in which maladjustment has been shown to exert a negative impact upon academic performance. As an example of cognitive dysfunction as a consequence of such adjustment difficulties, Fisher and Hood (1987, in Fisher, 1990) reported raised cognitive failure scores in all students following the transition to university. Lastly, Gelman (1999) found a positive relationship between minor psychiatric morbidity (estimated at 29% prevalence) at UCT and poor adjustment to the university (as indicated by a subjective sense of not feeling adjusted to university), suggesting a need for further research into the factors affecting adjustment at this, and perhaps other, institutions.

1.3.2. ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS

Wilson (1984) defines student adjustment problems as "difficulties brought about by a change in the educational setting, which prevent a student obtaining maximum benefit from his new environment" (p.2). He further suggested criteria for when adjustment problems ought to be deemed unacceptable. This is when individual adjustment problems are so potent that they disrupt a student's performance, when particular problems are experienced by more than one in three students, or when problems persist into the second or more years: "If they persist into subsequent years, then this is not simply a question of adjustment, but an indication of more fundamental disharmony that exists between the student and the university" (Wilson, 1984, p.5).

1.3.3. ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Although considerable information exists regarding university adjustment problems for students in developed countries, much less is to be found in the African research literature (Wilson, 1984) or in that on student adjustment problems in developing countries in general (Cherian & Cherian, 1998). This is despite the fact that such students are likely to experience relatively large numbers of adjustment problems when compared with those resident in developed countries (Wilson, 1984). In a survey conducted by Wilson (1984), Zambian undergraduate students described a large and diverse range of adjustment problems experienced when transferring from school to university. These student difficulties were characterised by their severity, generality and persistency (in terms of the latter, problems persisted well beyond first-year level). In a South African replication of this study, markedly similar perceptions as regards the nature, generality, severity and persistency of problems affecting academic success were found to exist among a sample of "non-traditional" students (Agar, 1990).

Nicholas (1995) found that the need for assistance with personal, career and learning skills concerns was much higher in a South African student sample than in a North American one, with University of the Western Cape students indicating a much higher overall level of need for help or information with all of the concerns listed than their white or black counterparts in North America. The likelihood that South African students experience significant adjustment problems has been proposed also by Cherian and Cherian (1998), who found 33 to 85% of first-year students sampled at the University of the North experienced adjustment difficulties.

Kagee, Naidoo and Mahatey (1997), in discussing some of the likely problems commonly encountered by students at South African historically black universities in particular, have suggested that many of these are related to alienation, interpersonal difficulties, psychological complaints such as anxiety and depression, financial matters, housing issues, adjustment difficulties related to the move from school to university and academic

and language-related problems. These difficulties were thought to impact negatively on the academic performance of students and contribute to the relatively high rate of student failure at similar universities (Kagee et al, 1997).

1.3.4. ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS OF BLACK STUDENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

While it is likely that within the broad spectrum of students entering universities in South Africa, many will experience adjustment difficulties, Kagee et al (1997) have suggested that the adjustment from high school to university is often particularly difficult and traumatic for first generation students. In the South African context, such first generation students are most likely to be those whose disadvantaged educational and socio-economic circumstances, brought about through the inequities of apartheid, may indeed make them particularly vulnerable to this change in environment. Black African university students making the transition to historically white universities are likely to constitute the majority in this significant grouping.

In South Africa, the inferior quality of black education, promoted at all levels along the separate and unequal lines (Agar, 1990) of apartheid policy, has long been a critical issue. Yet, although at the tertiary level the problems of high student attrition (Agar, 1990) and poor academic performance (Van Heerden, 1995) of black students are becoming more serious as more black students enter higher education, relatively little data exists with regard to the university education of black people in South Africa (Van Heerden, 1995).

The poor quality of black students' school education under the former Department of Education and Training (DET) is one factor often cited as being to some measure responsible for their underachievement in tertiary education. For instance, Honikman (1982) found that a lack of basic academic proficiency inherent in the academic transition from school to university had a destructive effect on the confidence and intellectual performance of black (including, in this case, "Coloured") first-year students at UCT. More recently, Kagee et al (1997) have argued that due to the gross historic inequality in

resource provision that was the legacy of apartheid education, students from disadvantaged backgrounds are generally under-prepared for the demands of tertiary education when compared to white students. These authors suggest that such inadequate pre-university preparation may in addition lead to students experiencing high levels of "anxiety and alienation from their lecturers, academic discourse, the evaluation process and the institution itself" (p.249). Warren (1997) too has suggested that academic difficulties, arising in part out of insufficient "familiarity with key concepts and the tools, codes and conventions of knowledge construction" (p.1), may contribute to increased anxiety and undermine self-confidence. Tredoux (personal communication, 1999) has commented in this regard on the likely influence of low self-esteem on the non-participation in group discussion and academic performance of black students enrolled in an academic development programme, and Meyer and Muller (1990, in Warren, 1997), have pointed to the greater impact that self-image has on the learning behaviour of black students than have such variables as workload and curriculum choice.

In a study conducted by the Equal Opportunity Research Project (1995) at UCT, the pattern of low academic success among a cohort of black students at the university was attributed in part to the educational disadvantage experienced by many of those students (the study noted too that the performance of black students was consistently the poorest of all 'race' groups at UCT). This disadvantage was understood to be associated not only with factors such as inadequate formal schooling, but also to related dimensions such as limited parental access to education as well as problems surrounding communication in a second language. With regard to language difficulties, the existence of predominantly non-native English speaking teachers in disadvantaged secondary schools has been associated with low levels of competence and confidence in general English language usage among students from such schooling backgrounds (Agar, 1990). Thus, language was found to constitute a significant factor in the adjustment problems affecting a sample of black students at a traditionally white South African university (Agar, 1990), and Kapp (1998) reported that black students who received their secondary education at elite, formerly white (ex-Model C) schools experienced fewer difficulties adjusting to UCT's

linguistic demands than did other D.E.T.-schooled students for whom this constituted a struggle.

Van Heerden (1995) examined the influence of socio-cultural background and environment on the academic performance of black students at a distance-education university in South Africa. Performance was found to be related to a variety of socio-cultural factors that included conditions during childhood, inadequate preparation for schooling, poor conditions and teaching in schools, unfamiliarity with the culture of learning, inefficient learning styles, problems with the organization of study and the use of available study time, language difficulties, economic and physical environmental factors. Luthuli, Masiea and Zuma (1992) emphasised the role played by socio-cultural background, as well as that of poor educational background, in the relatively poor academic performances of black South African nursing students. These authors allude furthermore to the difficulties such students typically encounter in having to internalise a new sub-culture and professional role in the course of their training.

Finally, the adverse effects of financial strain (academic fees and living costs, causing further uncertainty and anxiety), transport-problems and housing-related difficulties on the adjustment of black students to university in South Africa must be noted, as must the particular strain that living large distances from home must place upon individuals, especially within the current context of traumatised communities from which many students come. Coleman (1993) has commented on students' difficulties in coping with studies when co-occurring with significant problems like a death in the family, this being followed typically by a drop in performance. Hence, whereas such discrete traumatic events as bereavements or disruptions in family or interpersonal relationships can significantly impair a student's capacity to adjust in an unsupported environment, this is surely even more so the case in the context of continuous grief or re-traumatisation which many black students, as a consequence of the high prevalences of such afflictions as HIV/AIDS, poverty, violence or crime in their communities, must contend with. Mention must lastly be made of the oft-experienced difficulties of having to live up to the

expectations of families and communities, which can add significantly to the stress already experienced by students (Honikman, 1982).

The above range of potential problems can be conceptualised collectively as being located primarily within the individual - or within the socio-economic context or educational background of which that individual is a product. A further dimension to the challenges facing black students adjusting to university can be understood to be related to the characteristics of the institution itself, or the conditions under which black students and institutional qualities interact in relation to the academic and social objectives of the university. Of significance here are students' experiences and perceptions of the university environment, with its particular amalgam of 'race,' gender and institutional culture, and the ways in which these experiences and perceptions impact on the individual's ability to adjust effectively to the demands of university life. The discussion to follow will demonstrate how these two perspectives have informed much of the literature dealing with the adjustment of black university students in the U.S.A.

1.3.5. BLACK STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE ON PREDOMINANTLY WHITE CAMPUSES IN THE U.S.A.

In the USA, a significant body of research has addressed the position of ethnic minority students on university campuses and, in particular, the experience of the university environment and its relationship to psychological well-being and academic success among black (referred to as African-American in most studies) students at predominantly white universities. Much of this research has focused on two specific issues: the differential experience of these students relative to white students, and the differential effects of attending a predominantly white institution as opposed to an historically black one.

In terms of the first issue, the literature suggests that black students at predominantly white institutions are disadvantaged relative to white students in their having lower academic achievement levels and higher attrition rates than do white students (Allen,

1985). Furthermore, black students attending predominantly white universities experience poorer overall psychosocial adjustment (see Allen, 1991), with those difficulties arising from feelings of isolation, alienation, social estrangement and lack of support having been shown to be highly significant (Suen, 1983; Allen, 1985; Loo & Rolison, 1986; Allen, 1991; Jay & D'Augelli, 1991).

Some researchers have explored maladjustment, whether this be social or academic, in terms of potential student background, personal and/or cultural characteristics which underlie such adjustment difficulties. These include Gibbs (1974), who examined individual background and personality factors which better facilitated adaptation to a predominantly white university among black students, Trippi and Cheatham (1989), who investigated the role played by student characteristics and features of counselling programs in the academic performance of black freshmen on a predominantly white campus, and Adan and Felner (1995), who examined prior interracial experience in terms of students' high school/community racial environments and congruency with university environment to assess adjustment outcomes.

Nettles (1991) has suggested, however, that although factors such as high-school preparation, socio-economic status and admissions test scores have variously been seen as significant in determining student performance, researchers, beginning notably with Pascarella and Terenzini (1980, in Nettles, 1991), have more recently found that students' experiences and perceptions of the campus environment can have as great an impact on black student outcomes. Among those authors who have argued that university performance is as (if not more) successfully explained by characteristics of the institution as by characteristics of the person is Allen (1985), who emphasises the need for looking at both individual and structural levels, and in particular the accommodation between black students and white majority universities, in the determination of black student outcomes. Likewise, Loo and Rolison (1986), who found the socio-cultural alienation of minority students at a predominantly white university to be significantly greater than that of white students, defined alienation as "...the outcome of one's holding values highly divergent from those of the social collectivity, and...insufficient personal interaction with

other members of the collectivity" (p.59-60). These authors utilised Tinto's (1975, in Loo & Rolison, 1986) model of student attrition, in which persistence is understood as a function of student interaction and integration with university academic and social systems.

Other authors have also given consideration to the greater role played by person-environment transactions and university-contextual factors in the positive educational outcomes and persistence of African-American students than by intellectual and academic factors. Mannan, Charleston and Saghafi (1986) have claimed that negative campus environment is one of the most pervasive factors influencing higher educational achievement in African-American students. Fleming (1990, in Hershberger & D'Augelli, 1992) too has argued that such contextual variables as the supportiveness of the university environment need to be considered in understanding the lower academic achievement of African-American students. With regard to the differential effects of different socio-cultural university environments, the majority (Cheatham, Slaney & Coleman, 1990) of research has suggested that historically black universities are superior in nurturing the psychosocial and intellectual development of African-American students (Allen, 1985). Fleming (1984, in Strayhorn & Frierson, 1989) found that black students at white undergraduate institutions showed a decline in cognitive and psychosocial development not found for black students attending predominantly black undergraduate institutions, and that this decline was related to the alienation experienced at the white institutions. Furthermore, black students on black campuses demonstrated more positive psychosocial adjustments as well as significant academic gains than those on white campuses (Fleming, 1984, in Allen, 1991).

Finally, it must be added that although ideas regarding the relationship between African-American students and institutional environment have come to be pervasive in the literature (see for example Nottingham, Rosen & Parks, 1992; D'Augelli & Heshberger, 1993; Davis, 1994), research in this area has been characterised frequently by an empiricism and theoretical underdevelopment, being limited often to examinations and discussions of associations between such variables as social support, acculturation,

alienation, academic performance and psychological well-being (e.g. Jung & Khalsa, 1989; DeFour & Hirsch, 1990; Kimbrough, Molock, & Walton, 1996; James, 1998). A similar tendency appears frequently (though not exclusively) in the literature addressing black student adjustment to university in the local and, in particular, UCT contexts, as the following discussion will now demonstrate.

1.3.6. BLACK STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE OF UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT AT UCT

Honikman (1982) found that black students at UCT encountered particularly severe social and emotional difficulties in the transition from school to university which, compounded by an inadequate educational background, affected both their academic performance and general well-being. It was found also that these students typically responded to their new environment at the university with greater initial confusion and feelings of alienation - not only from white students, but also from their lecturers and the administration (Honikman, 1982).

Coleman (1993), commenting on the role played by such problems as social isolation and dislocation in low academic achievement, noted also the significant impact that social and personal pressures had on students whose poor performance had historically been attributed purely to academic pressures. Taljaard-Plaut and Strauss (1998) have described some of the potential transitions facing many black students when for the first time entering a tertiary institution such as UCT. These included adapting from a traditional African to modern Western culture, from a rural to an urban environment, and from being identified as a high achiever to being only one of many such students. These authors identified further the negative psychological consequences of possible improved financial circumstances and lifestyle relative to that of students' families, as well as the difficulty inherent in leaving the closeness and support of extended families and small communities to live in impersonal and isolating residences (Taljaard-Plaut & Strauss, 1998).

Though it is likely that some measure of alienation forms part of the initial experience of many students when transferring to university, Leon and Lea (1988) found black students at UCT experienced greater feelings of material, academic and social alienation than did white students at this institution (Leon & Lea, 1988; see these authors for a partial review of others who have reported on the phenomenon of black student alienation at predominantly white South African universities). Furthermore, 60% of black students in the Leon and Lea (1988) study described not feeling integrated into the university, which was felt not to cater for their social or political needs and as representing only the interest of whites.

In a later study, it was found that the student group feeling most alienated and "at risk" within the UCT environment was that of black male students, who, in particular, appeared least satisfied with their experience at the university, reporting high levels of frustration and alienation (Hall et al, 1995). It was reported too that white students felt students were more friendly and supportive than did black students, and suggested that the differential utilisation of recreational facilities along racial lines was also an indication of empowerment and alienation (Hall et al, 1995).

Even more recently, Kapp (1998) described comments made by ex-DET students who were at the time first-year arts and social science students at UCT. In essays written about their transition from school to university, these students typically characterised UCT's institutional culture as "English" and evidenced a sense of frustration, alienation and powerlessness in this regard (see Leon & Lea, 1988, for a review of other authors who have described black students finding the perceived white ethos of the university environment culturally alienating).

The relative lack of black academic staff or role models at UCT may have been one significant factor in any such perceptions of the "whiteness" of the institution. An UCT Employment Equity Progress Report (1998) reported that 82% of academic staff at the university at the time were white. The report also stated that a priority had been "a staff profile that better reflects the diverse society UCT serves ... However, the slow progress

towards employment equity contrasts with what has been achieved in respect of changing the race ... composition of the student body at the university over the past decade" (p.1). Furthermore, according to Hall, Rex and Sutherland (1995), cultural alienation was cited by staff as a significant factor impeding contact between staff and students, particularly the predominance of white male authority figures which may constitute an important factor compounding the sense of disempowerment of particular minorities such as black female students.

Finally, linguistic diversity and social rivalry among black South African students have been cited as additional and equally significant determinants of the cultural alienation of black students entering historically white universities (Thesen, 1994, in Warren, 1997). Apparent too from the group of essays cited by Kapp (1998) was that a considerable degree of the alienation black students experienced at UCT was in relation to other black students, the result of such factors, for instance, as language nationalism and the use of English to disguise unpopular ethnic identities.

1.3.7. ADJUSTING TO THE NEEDS OF BLACK STUDENTS

Despite having been made roughly a decade ago, and at a time when black students made up only 20% of the student body, Leon and Lea's (1988) contention that few South African studies have sought systematically to examine the position of black minority students on white majority campuses remains largely valid. Although the student population of UCT has become more heterogeneous and demographically representative of the composition of South Africa, and the university can be no longer said to be a predominantly white English-speaking university, it is highly possible that the process of adjustment for black students entering what may still endure as a traditionally white English first-language university remains a particularly difficult one.

Moreover, the continuing paucity of research into the complex status of black students vis-a-vis institutional culture may itself be the product of what Leon and Lea (1988) termed "a blind belief in the UCT community as non-racial (which) can lead to the denial

of racially defined problems ... which could lead to complacency" (p.18). In this regard, Kleintjes (1991) has maintained that although UCT considers itself to be an institution which provides equal access to educational resources to all students, the tendency to ignore 'race' completely for fear of engaging in discriminatory practices has resulted in some black students at UCT feeling that they are seen as colourless as UCT students, whilst outside of UCT they continue to lead oppressed lives. If, as seems likely, the enduring structure of apartheid society - of which UCT is an one-time product, persists in creating differential impacts on black and white students in terms of their position on campus, then such oppression must remain a feature of university life too, and it is imperative that research be undertaken with the goal of minimising feelings of alienation among this sector of students.

Wilson (1984) has suggested that "students who regard the university as being 'foreign' or irrelevant to their needs, will find adjusting to the university's academic and social milieu much more difficult than students who are in accord with the traditional aims and principles of university education" (p.8). Evidence of this exists in the finding by Hall et al (1995) of the apparent influence of 'race' on the distribution of academic results, with overall black students tending to struggle academically relative to white students. That those students who were the least successful academically also experienced the least sense of belonging at UCT was seen to support Kuh's (1992, in Hall et al, 1995) argument that a positive relationship exists between feeling valued at an institution and academic performance. In order, therefore, to facilitate successful university adjustment and, ultimately, student development, it is essential that students feel that they belong and can identify with the university's norms and structures, that they are positively acknowledged and recognised in their capabilities and worth, and that their experiences are validated by the social and learning context which surrounds them.

1.3.8. AIM OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Significantly, there exists a literature which addresses the person-environment congruence or "fit" that optimally exists between an individual and an institution. An example of this is the model proposed by Muchinsky and Monahan (1987, in Chartrand, 1990) which suggests that persons fit into an environment because they possess characteristics similar to those of persons in that environment (and, indeed, experience enhanced performance, satisfaction and adjustment as a result of such a fit). However, the area presently being investigated requires, it is argued, the development of a theory which takes into account not so much the "fit," but rather the "perceived fit" in terms of which an individual's capacity to function or cope in an organisation will be mediated through their perception of that organisation, and in particular their subjective appraisal of how that organisation relates to him or her.

The present study thus employed a multidimensional framework in terms of which adjustment was considered to be associated with factors not only relating to individual or cultural background, but also factors derived from the perceived institutional and social context with which students interact. These factors were considered also to a significant degree to be mutually-dependent on one other. Although a range of variables were subjected to analysis in the interests of exploring salient dimensions of adjustment within a first-year sample of UCT students, a particular focus was placed on black student adjustment, an area felt to be in need of such treatment from a multidimensional perspective. Furthermore, a large-scale study employing self-report methodology was utilised so as to survey as great a range of student experience - from students themselves, as possible. In this regard, Nicholas (1995) has acknowledged the importance of such broad needs assessment processes for student communities, observing that they are considered to be "a useful and efficient method of identifying university student concerns and essential for planning appropriate student service programmes" (p.33). He comments further on the utility of such measures in developing large and small group programmes

focusing on the expressed needs of students who may be in need of assistance though are reluctant to seek it, and also in allowing personnel involved in student health and development to claim a greater share of financial and personnel resources should the expressed needs of the student community be shown to be require such.

Chapter 2 : METHOD

2.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study employed a cross-sectional design to assess through self-report appraisal the quality of adjustment to UCT as experienced by a diverse a range of first-year students, and in particular first-year black students. Subjects completed questionnaires assessing the quality of various aspects of adjustment which students are likely to encounter in their transition to university. Data relating to socio-demographic variables (e.g. 'race,' gender, language and educational background) were analysed in terms of salient dimensions of adjustment, and relationships between such dimensions themselves investigated where possible. Adjustment was conceptualised in terms of a multidimensional experience encompassing a range of different dimensions such as academic performance, social functioning, psychological well-being and institutional commitment or belonging. These aspects were understood to be to a significant degree dependent upon one other, and to be influenced by factors derived from both the individual and the institution.

2.2. SUBJECTS

The sample consisted of 339 subjects (169 men and 170 women) drawn from the freshman (first time at university) population of UCT. The student population at the university was at the time approximately 25% black and 50% white, while in the present sample, 158 subjects (46.6%) were black and 181 (53.3%) white. It must be mentioned that although previous socio-economic or educational disadvantage may have been experienced by members of those ethnic groups (such as "Indian" or "Coloured") constituting the other 25% of the UCT population referred to above, the present study sought to examine comparisons only between black and white students.

The mean date of birth was approximately 1979 (±20 years of age). First-language English-speakers constituted 59% (n=200) of the sample, first-language Xhosa-speakers 10% (n=34) and first-language speakers of various other African languages 26.4% (n=89). Eighty-five subjects (25.07%) identified Cape Town as the place they had come from or been brought up in, while 252 (74.33%) indicated elsewhere. One hundred and eighty subjects (52.09%) acknowledged some past exposure to a multiracial schooling environment, while 159 (46.9%) indicated having had no such experience of multiracial schooling.

Courses from which students were sampled were selected pragmatically on the basis of their allowing relatively efficient access to sizeable lectures, and also as wide a cross-section of the UCT student population as possible. Time constraints and the need to secure permission from course administrators were further motivational factors involved in course-selection. Subjects were thus drawn from five different first-year courses spread across three faculties at the university. Approximately 12% of subjects were registered in the Faculty of Engineering, 35% in the Faculty of Humanities and 45% in the Faculty of Commerce, the rest originating in faculties such as those of Science and Architecture. Courses sampled consisted of a first-year whole-year Psychology 1 course, 3 contrasting single semester first-year Economics 1 courses, ECO111S, ECO110S and ECO110H, and a whole-year ASPECT (*'Academic Support Programme in Engineering at Cape Town'*) class of first-year students in the Engineering Faculty. Attempts to sample students also from "mainstream" first-year Engineering (i.e. non-Aspect) studies, thus allowing for some further measure of control of variables, proved unsuccessful due to lecture-timetabling constraints.

Proportions of subjects sampled in each course, and further assorted by 'race,' are tabled as follows:

Table 1: ***Breakdown of subjects according to course and 'race'***

	Black	White	Total *n*	Total %
Psychology 1	28	61	89	26.3
Aspect	43	0	43	12.7
ECO110H	34	8	42	12.4
ECO111S	15	81	96	28.3
ECO110S	38	31	69	20.4

Pertinent details regarding entrance criteria and teaching with respect to each course are to be found in Appendix 2. Basic course descriptions, however, are as follows:

PSY101W - first-year psychology course

A first-year whole year introductory course in psychology. Entrance criteria for the course are higher than those for most other Faculty of Humanities undergraduate courses.

ECO111S - second semester course in Economics

A first-year second semester course for students who had obtained a minimum mark of 45% in the final examinations for their first semester course.

ECO110S - repeat of first semester course in Economics

The first semester course referred to above, but repeated in the second semester for those students mostly who had failed in the first semester.

ECO110H - extended stream Economics course

A whole-year half-course version of the above semesterised course for students enrolled in an extended curriculum and frequently of previously disadvantaged educational backgrounds. The entrance criteria were lower than those for the above stream. Though no individual mentoring occurred in the course, lecturing was conducted by a single lecturer who remained with the class for the duration of the year, resulting in some greater measure of intimacy and personalised attention within the class than was possibly the case in the above courses.

ASPECT - academically-supported programme in Engineering

A programme in the Faculty of Engineering offering academic support to a group of students mostly with previous academic disadvantage. The entrance criteria were lower than those for the "mainstream" engineering courses. Although Aspect students shared tuition with "mainstream" classes in some of their subjects, they received separate tuition (in their own home-room) in the mathematics component of the course. Students also received the opportunity and were encouraged to utilise formal mentoring with staff members, as well as peer mentoring to a lesser extent.

2.3. MEASURES

2.3.1. STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire (see Appendix 1) comprising a section of questions eliciting socio-demographic information, another section addressing further dimensions of experience at UCT, and also a self-report questionnaire assessing student adjustment to the demands of university, the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) (Baker & Siryk, 1989), was administered to the sample.

2.3.1.1. QUESTIONS SOLICITING SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Data relating to the following demographic and background variables were elicited from respondents: gender, 'race,' date of birth, duration of stay at UCT and year of study, degree, town and province of origin, 1st and 2nd language, type of schooling received, mother's and father's highest level of education and family's estimated monthly income.

In addition, subjects were requested to estimate their 2nd semester academic performance through selection of the most appropriate response-category (75% or more = 1, 70%-75% = 2, 60-69% = 3, 50-59% = 4 or 50% or less = 5). Although a danger in eliciting subjective reports of academic functioning is that these may be skewed by factors other

than an accurate appraisal of current performance (e.g. states of depression, worthlessness or guilt), it was felt that such a self-report measure could still serve as an useful adjunct to the more comprehensive measure of academic adjustment to be found in the SACQ, discussed next. Its intended purpose was thus not so much an evaluation of students' experience of the learning environment as an attempt to yield some 'hard' data on academic performance as construed by the university's own system of appraisal. It must be noted too that attempts to secure permission from subjects to obtain official details regarding their academic results from Student Records would in all likelihood have compromised subjects' anonymity.

2.3.1.2. QUESTIONS ASSESSING OTHER DIMENSIONS OF STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE AT UCT

Another section of the questionnaire was designed to elicit responses of both a quantitative and a qualitative nature to dimensions of student experience likely to be associated with adjustment to university. It thus sought to examine, among other such salient issues in the experience of first-year at university, whether subjects had or had not experienced the desire to drop out of university during the past year or whether subjects had or had not undergone any painful events during the course of the year which may have affected them negatively. A further important aim of this section was to temper any extent to which the questionnaire could be experienced as impersonal and alienating (in its use of a Likert-type scale and mass-administration, through which a subject could be made to feel like just a 'number,' etc.), and thus to provide students with a forum in which to describe something of their own unique experience of being at UCT.

Apart from the inclusion as variables in the study of some of the items eliciting quantitative responses, partial use was also made of certain items designed to elicit qualitative accounts of life as first-year students at the university. Specifically, responses to particular items of this nature were selected so as to provide illustrative examples of experiences identified as salient through the quantitative analysis. The purpose of this

was again to attempt to impart a more 'subjective' or personal 'flavour' to the analysis so as to allow the students' voices also to be heard.

2.3.1.3. STUDENT ADAPTATION TO COLLEGE QUESTIONNAIRE (SACQ)

A 67-item self-report questionnaire (SACQ) (Baker & Siryk, 1984, 1989), designed for the specific purpose of assessing the quality of student adjustment to the university environment, was employed in the study. The theoretical rationale behind the SACQ's construction is that adjustment to university is a multidimensional process, requiring that students develop effective strategies for adapting to a host of demands varying in nature and degree (Baker & Siryk, 1989). In this regard, the instrument assesses effectiveness of adjustment in the academic, social and personal-emotional spheres, while also providing an index of the quality of relationship established between student and the institution. A number of other multidimensional screening devices have been employed in the measurement of student adjustment. Two such instruments are the College Adjustment Rating Scale (CARS) (Zitzow, 1984) and the College Adjustment Scales (CAS) (Anton & Reed, 1991, in Pinkney, 1992; see also Nafziger, Couillard & Smith, 1997). These instruments do not, however, possess corresponding measures of student commitment or affiliation to the institutions they are attending, nor are developed for specific uses other than in clinical or counselling centres. Furthermore, research utilising the CAS is purported to be in its infancy (Nafziger, Couillard, Smith & Wiswell, 1998). Of those considered, the SACQ was thus assessed to be the most appropriate instrument with which to investigate the notion of multifaceted adjustment as conceptualised in the present study.

The primary applications of the SACQ are counselling interventions (identification of potential and real adjustment problems), basic evaluation and research relating to university life (Baker & Siryk, 1989). The instrument has been used in an abundance of studies over recent years (Tomlinson-Clarke, 1998), as well as in numerous and diverse cross-cultural settings, including the former Czechoslovakia, Belgium and South Korea (Baker, personal communication, 1999) and has been evaluated as being of superior

potential in terms its usefulness and suitability to the purposes for which it was developed (Dahmus, Bernardin & Bernardin, 1992).

2.3.1.3.1. INTERPRETATION AND USE

The SACQ requires of respondents to rate statements on a 9-point Likert-type scale that ranges from *"applies very closely to me"* to *"doesn't apply to me at all."* So as to ensure that the phrasing and meaning of statements were relevant to local conditions, a pilot administration was conducted on students approaching the Student Health Service on an afternoon during the month prior to administration. On the basis of the findings, minor changes were made to the wording of certain items in the scale.

An overall or *Full Scale* adjustment score is obtained on the SACQ by summing the scores on all 67 items, while the instrument yields further scores on 4 principal subscales, each of which assesses a broad facet of adjustment to the university environment: academic, social, personal-emotional and goal commitment-institutional attachment.

Academic adjustment (24 items) examines the student's capacity to cope with the particular educational demands inherent in the university experience. It measures four clusters of experience in particular. These are motivation, encompassing attitudes towards academic goals and work, being at university and sense of educational purpose; application, focussing on how well motivation is translated into academic effort and requirements; performance, involving the efficacy of academic effort and functioning as reflected in aspects of academic performance; and, lastly, satisfaction with the academic environment. Examples of items contained in each of the respective clusters include *Item 50* ("I am enjoying my academic work at university"), *Item 3* ("I have been keeping up to date on my academic work"), *Item 13* ("I am satisfied with the level at which I am performing academically") and *Item 54* ("I am satisfied with my programme of courses for this semester"). Empirically derived correlates of the Academic Adjustment subscale indicate that lower scores are associated with lower overall academic results in the first-

year, feelings of lack of control over the outcome of one's academic efforts, unstable and age-inappropriate goals and less realistic self-appraisal (Baker & Siryk, 1989).

Social adjustment (20 items) measures the student's ability to cope with the interpersonal and societal demands characteristic of adjustment to university. It incorporates four specific item clusters. These are the capacity for involvement in social activities and functioning in general, relationships with other people on campus, the ability to cope with social relocation and being away from home and significant persons there, and general satisfaction with the social aspects of the university environment. Examples of items contained in each of the respective clusters include *Item 37* ("I feel that I have enough social skills to get along well in the university setting), *Item 63* ("I have some good friends or acquaintances at university with whom I can talk about any problems I may have"), *Item 51* ("I have been feeling lonely a lot at university lately") and *Item 30* ("I am satisfied with the extracurricular activities available at university"). Behavioural correlates of this subscale demonstrate that lower scores are associated with, among other things, greater social distress and avoidance, greater sense of loneliness, less perceived social support, less social self-confidence and self-concept and less participation in social activities within the university environment (Baker & Siryk, 1989).

Personal-Emotional adjustment (15 items) focuses on the student's intrapsychic state during adjustment to university and the degree to which he or she is experiencing general psychological distress and concomitant somatic problems. It incorporates two clusters, the first of which examines the subject's sense of psychological well-being, and the second his or her sense of physical well-being. Examples of items include in the first instance *Item 7* ("Lately I have been feeling down and moody a lot") and *Item 12* ("Being on my own, taking responsibility for myself, has not been easy"), and in the second, *Item 11* ("I have felt tired much of the time lately") and *Item 55* ("I have been feeling in good health lately"). Specifically, lower scores on this subscale have been associated with a greater likelihood of being known to campus psychological services, fewer coping resources and a greater degree of emotional distress, anxiety and depression (Baker & Siryk, 1989).

Goal Commitment-Institutional Attachment (15 items) is designed to measure the student's degree of commitment to educational-institutional goals and the level of attachment or affiliation to the particular institution the student is attending. It thus addresses the quality of the relationship or bond that is established between the student and the institution. The two item clusters of this subscale include, firstly, feelings about, or the degree of satisfaction with, being at university in general and, secondly, feelings about attending the particular institution in question. Items representing the first cluster include *Item 15* ("I am pleased now about my decision to go to university") and *Item 61* ("Lately I have been giving considerable thought to taking time off from university and finishing later"). The second cluster includes items such as *Item 34* ("I wish I were at another university"). Lower scores on this subscale have been associated with a greater likelihood of discontinuing enrolment and less overall satisfaction with the university experience (Baker & Siryk, 1989).

On all SACQ indices, higher scores correspond to greater success in self-evaluated adjustment to university, while the lower the score the greater is the difficulty being experienced. Scores can be interpreted in terms of raw scores, standardised T-scores or percentile ranks. Subjects with similar Full Scale scores may have very different and indeed unique subscale-profiles, leading the authors to caution against over-reliance on or exclusive interest in the Full Scale performance and attendant loss of important information.

2.3.1.3.2. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE SACQ

Based on their normative sample of first- and second-semester freshmen at two Massachusetts, U.S.A. colleges in the academic years from 1980-81 through 1984-85, Baker and Siryk (1989) reported alpha coefficients for the Full Scale ranging from .92 to .95, for the Academic adjustment subscale from .81 to .90, for the Social adjustment subscale from .83 to .91, for the Personal-Emotional subscale from .77 to .86 and for the Attachment subscale from .92 to .95. Such results would suggest a high degree of internal

consistency reliability for each scale. The authors further present intercorrelations among the subscales and between the subscales and the Full Scale which are sizeable enough to suggest that the subscales are measuring a common construct, though small enough to indicate that this construct indeed possesses different facets as reflected in the subscales (Baker & Siryk, 1989).

Criterion-related validity evidence consists of numerous studies presenting significant correlations between the SACQ scales and independent real-life behaviours and outcomes which are assumed to reflect the influence of the variables measured by the instrument (Baker & Siryk, 1989).

2.3.1.3.3. LIMITATIONS OF THE SACQ

Two specific limitations of the SACQ are worthy of consideration (Baker & Siryk, 1989) in the present analysis. Firstly, the transparency of purpose inherent in the instrument's design may produce a response bias in the form of a tendency to respond to items in terms of their social desirability rather than their content. No specific measure of social desirability or response distortion was, however, utilised in this study.

A second possible limitation resides in the norms for the SACQ being based exclusively on normative data obtained from two North American institutions. Baker and Siryk (1989) point out in this regard that subsequent studies have pointed to the likely generalisability of these findings to other institutions. Yet, they caution too against the uncritical assumption of the applicability of such standardised data to other populations. This has particular bearing in the case of populations which differ significantly from the original normative sample in their ethnic or cultural characteristics, as is likely to be the case in the present sample from a highly diverse South African university population.

2.4. PROCEDURE

The data for the study were collected during the month of September 1999. Permission was obtained to utilise the lecture-periods in question for the duration of administration, and questionnaires distributed at the onset of each lecture, subsequent to a brief, standardised introductory speech orienting participants to the broad aims of the study. Completion-time for the questionnaire ranged approximately from 25-50 minutes and appeared to be uniform between lecture-groups.

A total number of 496 students across all five classes completed questionnaires. This represented on average approximately 80% of the students initially gathered at each of the lectures, the remaining roughly 20% constituting the proportion of students in each class who left the venue prior to distribution of the questionnaires (the exception was the administration to the Aspect class, at which all students present completed the questionnaire). To these relatively minor attrition rates must be added the further notable feature that a large proportion of students in each course (less so with the Aspect class) had refrained from attending the lectures during which administration took place. Considering that such students may have been utilising the lecture-time for additional examination-preparation, that they may have represented an-already struggling population or that this may have constituted a typical attrition phenomenon characterising end-of-year formal lecturing, it would seem presumptuous to determine the direction of contamination should such an effect have existed.

From the original total sample (n = 496) the following categories of subjects/cases were excluded: students who had not identified their gender (1 subject); students who were not in their first year of registration at UCT (39 subjects); those who indicated they were in their first year at UCT, though in their second or later year of study, having perhaps transferred from another university or tertiary institution (2 subjects); students of 'race'

groups other than black or white, i.e. "Coloured," "Indian" or "Other" (100 subjects); and students born prior to 1975 (16 subjects). The rationale for exclusion of this final category of subjects related to the possible confounding effect which the presence of 'mature' students may have brought to a study investigating university adjustment in the context of the developmental transition from school to young adulthood.

2.5. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

So as to ensure that ethical research practices were employed throughout all phases of the study, the following measures were undertaken.

Subjects were advised that participation in the study was entirely voluntary and that completed questionnaires ought to be anonymous with no opportunity for individual sets of responses to be linked to the identities of particular respondents. Furthermore, the strictest confidentiality was maintained during the administration process itself, and respondents were assured of this safeguard prior to administration of the questionnaires. The above measures were deemed particularly necessary due to the potential for students to experience as revealing and compromising the nature of the information requested.

Respondents were also encouraged to approach the Student Health Service at UCT should particular feelings they would want to discuss arise out of completion of the questionnaire. Specific time and resources were set aside for this purpose, as it was anticipated that at least a small number of respondents might make use of this opportunity, thereby providing the additional function of linking students who have a need to engage with particular difficulties of adjustment to university with the appropriate resources. During the pilot administration, it was observed that a minor therapeutic effect could be derived from completion of the questionnaire. In this regard, respondents in feedback generally expressed a feeling of having had their experiences 'understood' and 'acknowledged' by the questionnaire.

Lastly, as an attempt to provide some measure of inclusivity, and to counter any potential for the administration process itself to mimic any potentially one-sided, exploitative or alienating institutional process, respondents were advised when and where the results of the study would be available for their perusal and discussion, if so desired.

The protocol for the study was reviewed and approved by the UCT Ethics Review Panel: Humanities Graduate Education and Research Committee.

2.6. METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Data analysis proceeded from descriptive statistics to examine the relationships between individual dimensions of university adjustment (academic, social, personal-emotional, institutional attachment), as reflected in mean SACQ scores, and certain socio-demographic variables hypothesised to be salient in the context of adjustment. Such variables included age, first-language, place of origin, 'race,' course of study, exposure to a multiracial schooling environment and gender. Due to 'race' being hypothesised to constitute so significant a factor in the differential experience of adjustment to university, however, it was decided to submit the variable, course of study, to analysis only insofar as it was seen to interact with 'race' in this regard.

Further investigation undertook to establish whether mean scores on the SACQ scales related to likely further dimensions of adjustment. These included variables such as the subjective estimate of university academic performance over the last semester, whether subjects had given consideration to dropping out during the past year and whether they had had a painful event or experience during the last year which may have affected them negatively.

Statistical analyses included the use of independent t-test analyses, analyses of variance and chi-square tests. Due regard was given to the consideration that the more comparisons undertaken, the higher the probability that a proportion of these comparisons would produce significant differences by chance. Thus, a consequence of conducting

numerous analyses upon the same data is an increased chance of committing a Type I error, which is the probability of detecting a statistically significant difference or relationship when in reality there is none (Howell, 1989). However, motivation for risking the occurrence of such an error is sought in the exploratory nature of this study, as well as the undesired outcome of committing a Type II error (i.e. falsely rejecting a significant result) and therein overlooking potentially meaningful findings.

Chapter 3 : RESULTS

3.1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS - SACQ SCORES

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for the available SACQ scores as exhibited in the Full Scale and Academic, Social, Personal-Emotional and Institutional Attachment subscales. Raw scores on the SACQ were converted into T-scores based on sample norms (Baker & Siryk, 1989). Although both raw scores and T-scores are tabled, exclusive use was made of T-scores for purposes of analysis.

Table 2: ***Descriptive data for SACQ scores***

	n	Mean	Standard deviation	Confid. Lim. -95%	Confid. Lim. +95%	Minimum	Maximum
Raw scores							
Full Scale	339	401.4	64.9	394.5	408.3	206.8	551.0
Academic	338	136.0	26.3	133.1	138.8	62.0	198.0
Social	339	124.3	23.2	121.8	126.8	54.4	173.3
P/Emotional	339	81.7	21.1	79.5	83.9	16.0	127.0
Institutional	339	106.7	17.7	104.8	108.5	42.7	135.0
T-scores							
Full Scale	339	46.2	9.5	45.2	47.2	26.0	71.0
Academic	338	46.4	9.5	45.4	47.4	25.0	71.0
Social	339	47.8	9.2	46.8	48.8	26.0	74.0
P/Emotional	339	44.0	20.0	43.0	45.1	25.0	71.0
Institutional	339	52.3	9.4	51.3	53.3	26.0	75.0

In addition, measures of internal consistency reliability were obtained for the current sample. Cronbach's alphas for the Full Scale and 4 subscales were in keeping with alpha coefficients derived from the normative data, suggesting adequate internal reliability: Full Scale Adjustment = .92; Academic Adjustment = .84; Social Adjustment = .83; Personal-Emotional Adjustment = .81; Institutional Attachment = .81.

3.2. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE AND ADJUSTMENT

Mean SACQ scores were analysed in terms of subjects' date of birth so as to determine whether students falling in different 'age-groups' fared differently in terms of adjustment. Age intervals were divided into 2 categories for purposes of this analysis. Subjects roughly 19 years-old or younger (n=231) constituted one category and those older than roughly 19 (n=108) the other. Table 3 presents the results of an independent t-test which reveals that subjects roughly 19 years-old or younger scored significantly lower in mean Academic Adjustment than did those born prior to that year. Comparisons of mean scores on the other adjustment scales did not yield significant differences between the two age-groups.

Table 3: ***Relationship between mean SACQ score and age***

	n	*n*	Mean	Mean	SD	SD			
	19 or younger	older	19 or younger	older	19 or younger	older	t-val	df	p
Full Scale	231	108	45.71	47.28	9.1345	10.12	-1.42	337	.154
Academic	231	107	45.52	48.25	9.2491	9.840	-2.47	336	.013
Social	231	108	47.42	48.69	8.9938	9.703	-1.17	337	.239
P/Emotional	231	108	44.11	43.89	9.8121	10.41	.187	337	.851
Institutional	231	108	52.02	52.78	9.1475	10.06	-.691	337	.490

3.3. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FIRST LANGUAGE AND ADJUSTMENT

A t-test analysis was carried out so as to establish whether quality of adjustment, as operationalised along the lines of the SACQ scales, varied significantly between English first language-speaking subjects (English being the medium of instruction at UCT) and first language-speakers of languages other than English. First-language Afrikaans-speakers and first-language speakers of foreign languages (other than languages

emanating from African countries other than South Africa) were excluded from the analysis. The results, indicating that first-language English-speaking students scored significantly higher (effect size = 0.267; power = 63%) on the Social Adjustment subscale than did their non-first-language English-speaking counterparts, are reported in Table 4.

Table 4: ***Relationship between adjustment and first language (English vs. non-English speakers)***

	n	*N*	Mean	Mean	SD	SD			
	Engl.	Non	Engl.	Non	Engl.	Non	t-val	df	p
Full Scale	200	123	46.485	45.463	9.176	9.909	.9422	321	.34677
Academic	200	122	46.265	46.336	8.879	10.438	-.065	320	.94811
Social	200	123	48.750	46.292	9.387	8.8389	2.335	321	.02014
P/Emotional	200	123	44.280	43.105	9.879	10.23	1.022	321	.30708
Institutional	200	123	52.520	51.715	9.025	10.07	.7440	321	.45741

3.4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PLACE OF ORIGIN AND ADJUSTMENT

An investigation into the possible relationship between adjustment/SACQ score and the potential effects of studying away from 'home' was conducted. Subjects responded to the question, "Where do you come from (e.g. where were you brought up)?" by indicating both a town and province of origin. An independent t-test analysis of mean SACQ scores was carried out between subjects citing Cape Town and those indicating elsewhere in their responses. No significant difference (Full Scale t=.07, df=335, p=.93; Academic Adjustment t=-.22, df=334, p=.82; Social Adjustment t=.11, df=335, p=.90; Personal-Emotional Adjustment t=.68, df=335, p=.49; Institutional Attachment -.70, df=335, p=.48) in mean adjustment scores was seen to exist between the two groups.

3.5. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN 'RACE' AND ADJUSTMENT

A substantial hypothesis in the study, namely that of the possible relationship between subjects' 'race' and the capacity to adjust to university life, was then investigated. Independent t-test analyses were conducted on the SACQ Full Scale and four adjustment subscales to determine whether scores varied significantly according to 'race.' Results of the t-tests are reported in Table 5.

Table 5: ***Relationship between 'race' and SACQ score***

	n	*n*	Mean	Mean	SD	SD			
	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	t-val	df	p
Full Scale	158	181	45.28	47.02	9.90	9.03	-1.6	337	.09
Academic	157	181	46.03	46.69	10.40	8.64	-.63	336	.52
Social	158	181	46.34	49.13	8.92	9.31	-2.8	337	.00
P/Emotional	158	181	42.98	44.97	10.0	9.90	-1.8	337	.06
Institutional	158	181	51.53	52.90	9.94	8.95	-1.3	337	.18

The results demonstrated that white students in the sample scored significantly higher ($p<.05$) on the Social Adjustment subscale than did black students in the sample (effect size = 0.295; power = 77%). No significant differences were found on the other scales, although there appeared a tendency for white subjects to score higher on both the Personal-Emotional Subscale ($p=.06$) and Full Scale ($p=.09$) than did their black counterparts.

3.6. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN 'RACE,' COURSE AND ADJUSTMENT

A second analysis was carried out with the intention of noting the combined effect of 'race' and course of study on mean adjustment. Of specific interest was the extent to which course of study, in conjunction with 'race,' was accountable for significant variance in scores on the SACQ. To this end, a series of 5 x 2 ANOVAs were conducted on the SACQ Full Scale and four subscales. So as to account for the existence of different sample sizes, the regression method of calculating ANOVAs was used in this instance, as it was throughout the study. In addition, due to the presence of an empty cell in the current analysis (there being no white students in the Aspect class), no interaction effects could be calculated. Planned comparisons were thus carried out on all simple effects. Means and standard deviations for SACQ scores across the five different courses sampled are presented for each of the five respective SACQ scales (see Table 6).

Table 6: ***Means and standard deviations of SACQ scores according to 'race' and course***

Full Scale Adjustment	Black		White	
	M	SD	M	SD
Psy1	**46.3**	9.3	**47.6**	8.6
Aspect	**48.8**	9.8	**0.0**	0.0
ECO110H	**42.3**	7.6	**42.3**	6.0
ECO111S	**45.2**	10.0	**49.2**	9.0
ECO110S	**43.3**	11.3	**41.5**	7.8

Academic Adjustment	Black		White	
	M	SD	M	SD
Psy1	**48.7**	9.2	**49.0**	7.9
Aspect	**50.2**	9.6	**0.0**	0.0
ECO110H	**43.3**	9.4	**42.5**	6.7
ECO111S	**46.4**	10.2	**47.7**	8.7
ECO110S	**41.8**	11.2	**40.5**	7.2

Social Adjustment	Black		White	
	M	SD	M	SD
Psy1	**46.0**	7.5	**49.3**	9.5
Aspect	**47.8**	8.7	**0.0**	0.0
ECO110H	**43.8**	6.5	**44.0**	6.2
ECO111S	**44.6**	9.3	**50.7**	9.5
ECO110S	**48.0**	11.3	**46.0**	8.2

P/Emotional Adjustment	Black		White	
	M	SD	M	SD
Psy1	**43.7**	9.3	**44.2**	10.7
Aspect	**46.0**	11.2	**0.0**	0.0
ECO110H	**39.6**	8.1	**41.4**	7.7
ECO111S	**45.1**	10.9	**47.5**	9.1
ECO110S	**41.3**	9.6	**40.9**	9.3

Institutional Adjustment	Black		White	
	M	SD	M	SD
Psy1	**50.6**	8.1	**51.9**	8.1
Aspect	**54.4**	10.9	**0.0**	0.0
ECO110H	**50.6**	7.5	**49.5**	7.7
ECO111S	**48.9**	10.4	**55.5**	9.1
ECO110S	**50.9**	11.5	**48.9**	8.6

The same data of mean SACQ scores according to 'race' and course are displayed graphically in Figures 1-5 on the next pages:

Figure 1: ***Graph of Full Scale Adjustment***

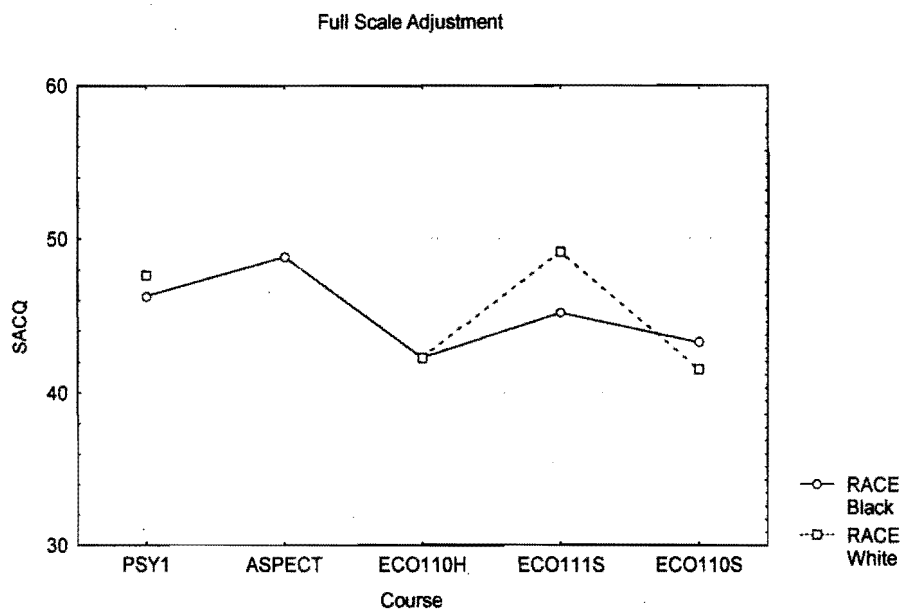


Figure 2: ***Graph of Academic Adjustment***

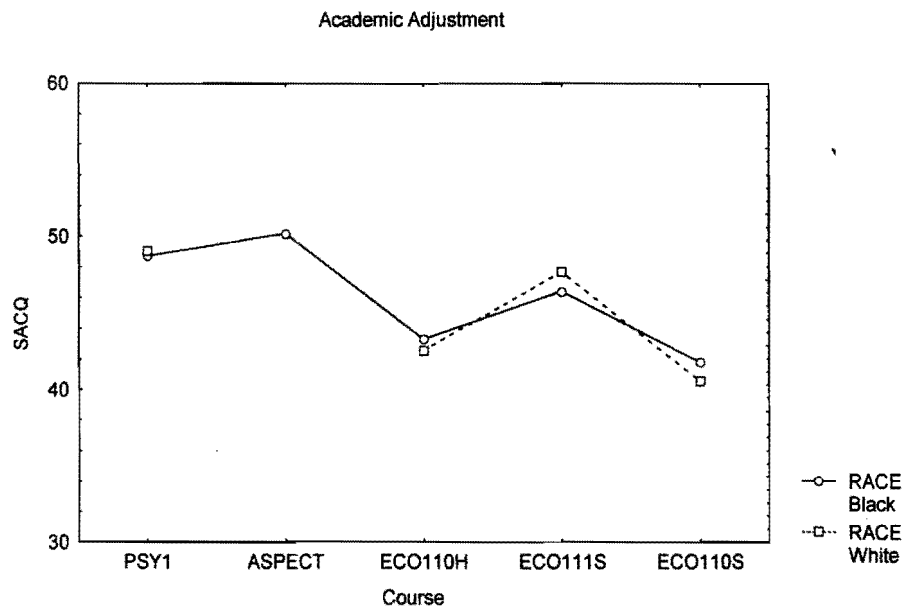


Figure 3: ***Graph of Social Adjustment***

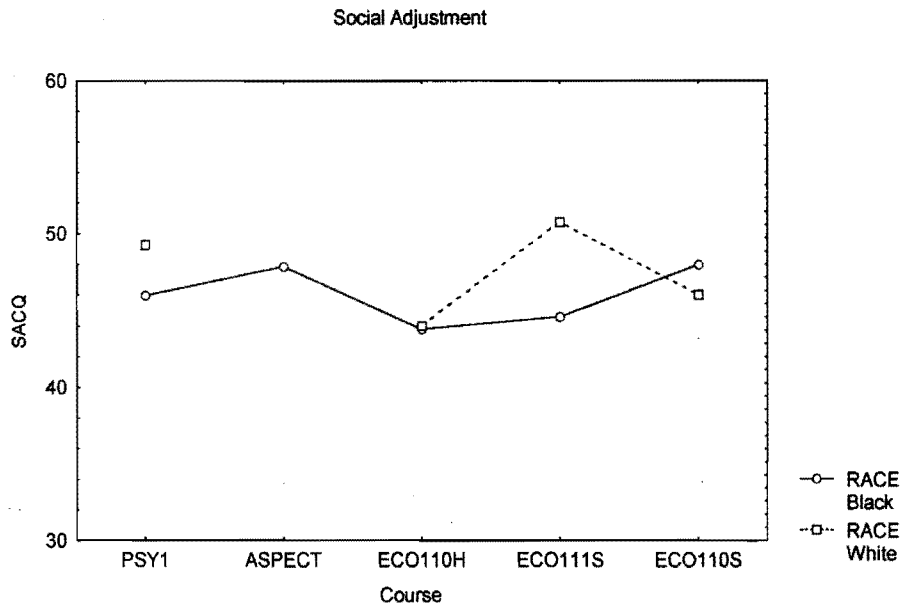


Figure 4: ***Graph of Personal-Emotional Adjustment***

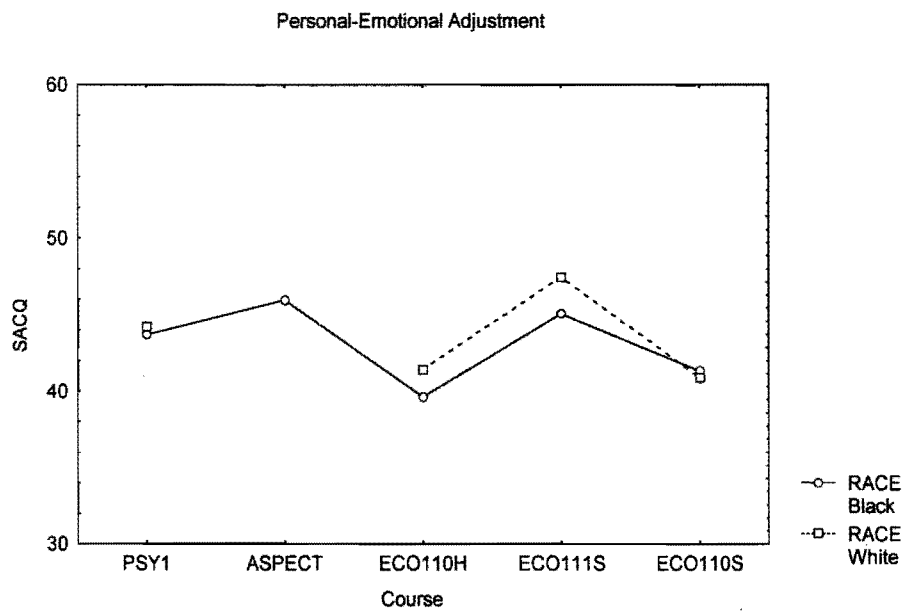
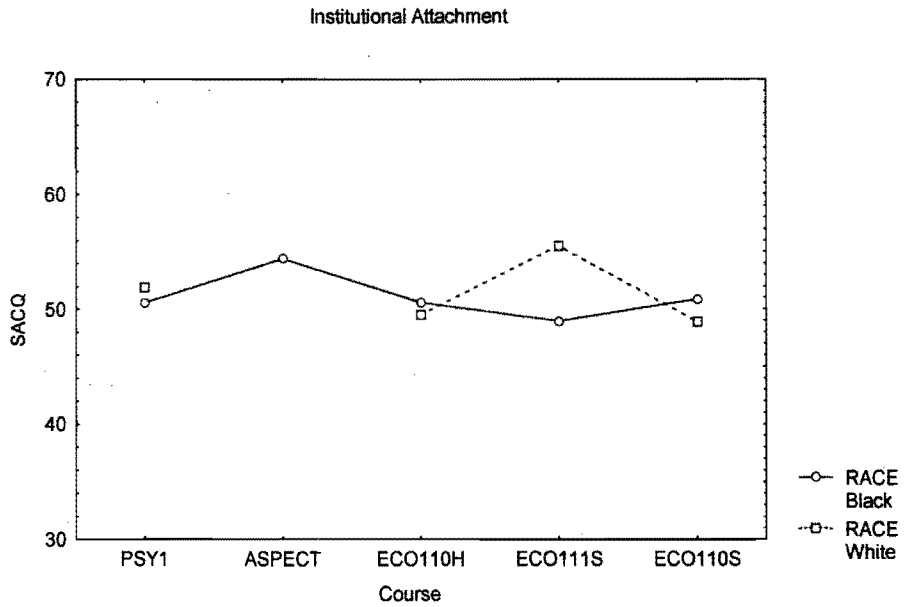


Figure 5: ***Graph of Institutional Attachment***



The results of the ANOVAs, presented in Tables 7 to 8, report main effects with regard to 'race' and course respectively. As described in Table 7, no significant main effects due to 'race' were evident in the analysis. On the other hand, significant main effects due to course were evident on the Full Scale as well as Academic and Personal-Emotional subscales, as described in Table 8. It must be noted, however, that due to the emphasis in this study being on the hypothesised effects of 'race' on the differential experience of students in the first-year campus environment, 'course of study' was employed specifically so as to illuminate further the relationship between 'race' and other putative dimensions of adjustment (e.g. academic support, form of instruction, etc.). Consequently, any main effects attributable to subjects' course were not explored further in the current analysis.

Table 7: ***Main effects ('race') in the ANOVA conducted on 'race,' course and SACQ score***

	df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p-level
Full Scale	1	.07146	330	83.4066	.000857	.97666
Academic	1	65.9643	329	81.5830	.808554	.36920
Social	1	117.227	330	81.6906	1.43501	.23180
P\Emotional	1	6.6606	330	94.8376	.070232	.79116
Institutional	1	7.8491	330	85.5743	.091724	.76218

Table 8: ***Main effects (course) in the ANOVA conducted on 'race,' course and SACQ score***

	df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p-level
Full Scale	4	429.7071	330	83.4066	5.15195	.00048
Academic	4	816.724	329	81.5831	10.0109	.00000
Social	4	81.7641	330	81.6905	1.00090	.40715
P\Emotional	4	321.772	330	94.8376	3.39287	.00972
Institutional	4	157.4862	330	85.5743	1.84034	.12074

The results of planned comparisons of black and white subjects within individual courses are presented next, followed by a tabular presentation of comparisons of subjects of the same 'race' but residing in different courses.

Planned comparisons: Comparing 'race' groups within each course

Comparing black and white subjects within individual courses, it was found that white students in ECO111S scored significantly higher on Social Adjustment (F=5.81, df=1, 330, p=.016) and Institutional Attachment (F=6.39, df=1, 330, p=.012) than did black students in that class. No significant differences were found to exist between black or white students in the other courses.

Planned comparisons: Comparing different courses within the same 'race'

Table 9 presents the results of significant and near-significant comparisons of mean adjustment between subjects of the same 'race' though residing in different courses. The results from each of the five adjustment scales are presented one after the other, with the direction of significance described under "Direction of Relationship." In cases where tendencies (i.e. $p<.1$) are evident, but comparisons are statistically non-significant at the $p<.05$ level, the symbol, "=" is used to denote the relationship. In such cases, however, the course from which the "higher" mean score has been derived has still been placed in the left-hand side column, while the "lower"-scoring course is found in the right-hand column.

Table 9: ***Planned comparisons of mean SACQ scores of subjects of the same 'race' residing in different courses***

SCALE	'RACE'	COURSE	DIRECTION OF RELATIONSHIP	COURSE	*F*-value	p
Full Scale	**Black**	Aspect	>	ECO110H	9.83	.001
		Aspect	>	ECO110S	7.51	.006
	White	Psy1	>	ECO110S	9.34	.002
		ECO111S	>	ECO110H	4.17	.041
		ECO111S	>	ECO110S	4.17	.041
Academic	**Black**	Aspect	>	ECO110H	10.98	.001
		Aspect	>	ECO110S	17.45	.000
		Psy1	>	ECO110H	5.39	.02
		Psy1	>	ECO110S	9.32	.002
		ECO111S	=	ECO110S	2.83	.093
	White	Psy1	>	ECO110S	18.20	.000
		ECO111S	>	ECO110S	14.02	.000
		Psy1	=	ECO110H	3.71	.054
Social	**Black**	Aspect	=	ECO110H	3.81	.051
		ECO110S	=	ECO110H	3.84	.051
	White	ECO111S	>	ECO110H	4.03	.040
		ECO111S	>	ECO110S	6.05	.010
Personal-Emotional	**Black**	Aspect	>	ECO110H	8.03	.004
		Aspect	>	ECO110S	4.57	.030
		ECO110S	=	ECO110H	3.25	.071
	White	ECO111S	>	Psy1	3.95	.040
		ECO111S	>	ECO110S	10.33	.001
Institu-tional	**Black**	Aspect	>	ECO111S	3.91	.040
		Aspect	=	Psy1	2.93	.080
		Aspect	=	ECO110H	3.25	.070
		Aspect	=	ECO110S	2.97	.080
	White	ECO111S	>	Psy1	5.18	.020
		ECO111S	>	ECO110S	11.42	.000
		ECO111S	=	ECO110H	3.06	.080

Summary of significant findings in Table 9:

- Black students in Aspect scored significantly higher than black students in ECO110H and ECO110S on Full Scale Adjustment, Academic Adjustment and Personal-

Emotional Adjustment, with a tendency to score higher also on Institutional Attachment

- White students in ECO111S scored significantly higher than white students in ECO110S on all adjustment scales, significantly higher than those in Psychology 1 on Personal-Emotional Adjustment and Institutional Attachment, and significantly higher than those in ECO110H on Full Scale Adjustment and Social Adjustment (with a tendency to score higher on Institutional Attachment).
- Academic adjustment: Black students in Psychology 1 scored significantly higher than their counterparts in ECO110S and ECO110H, with white students in Psychology 1 scoring significantly higher than those in ECO110S and displaying a tendency to score higher than those in ECO110H.
- Institutional Adjustment: Black students in Aspect scored significantly higher than those in ECO111S and displayed a tendency to score higher than black students in all 3 other courses sampled (i.e. Psychology 1, ECO110S and ECO110H).

3.7 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN 'RACE,' EXPOSURE TO A MULTIRACIAL SCHOOLING ENVIRONMENT AND ADJUSTMENT

The possible mediating effects of a multiracial schooling background (and hence previous exposure to ethno-cultural diversity) on adjustment to a culturally heterogeneous university environment was investigated. Factorial analyses of variance (ANOVA) examining the relationship between 'race,' mean SACQ score and a multiracial schooling background yielded a significant main effect for 'race' on the Social Adjustment subscale (F=3.96, df=1, 335, p=.047) with white subjects scoring significantly higher than did their black counterparts on this scale. However, no evidence for significant main effects (multiracial schooling) or for significant interaction effects were detected on any of the adjustment scales. See Tables 10 and 11 for mean summaries and results of the ANOVA.

Table 10: ***Summary of mean SACQ scores according to 'race' and exposure to a multiracial schooling environment***

	n	Full Scale		Academic		Social		P\Emotional		Institutional	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Black w/o M-R	108	45.39	10.11	46.67	10.65	45.69	8.57	42.81	10.58	51.47	9.91
Black M-R	50	45.04	9.54	44.66	9.91	47.74	9.57	43.36	8.76	51.68	10.09
White w/o M-R	51	45.41	9.18	45.11	8.32	48.29	10.29	43.49	9.16	52.56	9.74
White M-R	130	47.66	8.92	47.31	8.72	49.46	8.92	45.55	10.15	53.03	8.664

Table 11: ***Main and interaction effects in the ANOVA conducted on 'race,' exposure to a multiracial school environment and SACQ score***

	df	MS	df	MS		
	Effect	Effect	Error	Error	F	p-level
Full Scale						
'Race'	1	122.7743	335	89.24555	1.375691	.241670
School	1	63.2653	335	89.24555	.708890	.400413
Interaction	1	120.2498	335	89.24555	1.347404	.246559
Academic						
'Race'	1	21.3660	334	90.21597	.236831	.626823
School	1	.6031	334	90.21597	.006686	.934882
Interaction	1	312.9870	334	90.21597	3.469308	.063395
Social						
'Race'	1	330.1461	335	83.42517	3.957392	.047479
School	1	182.5199	335	83.42517	2.187828	.140045
Interaction	1	13.6338	335	83.42517	.163426	.686280
P\Emotional						
'Race'	1	145.5543	335	99.25578	1.466457	.226759
School	1	120.3340	335	99.25578	1.212363	.271655
Interaction	1	40.7666	335	99.25578	.410723	.522041
Institutional						
'Race'	1	106.5494	335	89.42422	1.191505	.275811
School	1	8.1182	335	89.42422	.090782	.763372
Interaction	1	1.2142	335	89.42422	.013578	.907307

3.8. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN 'RACE,' GENDER AND ADJUSTMENT

Factorial ANOVAs were further conducted on the Full Scale and four SACQ subscales to determine whether scores varied significantly according to 'race' and gender. Summaries of means and the results of the ANOVAs are described in Tables 12 and 13.

Table 12: ***Summary of mean SACQ scores according to 'race' and gender***

	n	Full Scale		Academic		Social		P\Emotional		Institutional	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Black Men	83	46.18	10.93	46.69	11.25	47.10	9.29	43.50	10.97	52.59	11.25
White Men	86	47.03	9.76	44.67	9.16	49.43	9.40	46.69	9.69	53.62	9.62
Black Wom.	75	44.29	8.59	45.28	9.44	45.49	8.48	42.41	8.88	50.37	8.17
White Wom.	95	47.02	8.35	48.52	7.75	48.86	9.28	43.41	9.88	52.25	8.30

Table 13: ***Main and interaction effects in the ANOVA conducted on 'race,' gender and SACQ score***

	df	MS	df	MS		
	Effect	Effect	Error	Error	F	p-level
Full Scale						
Gender	1	76.0405	335	89.39310	.850630	.357038
'Race'	1	269.8993	335	89.39310	3.019241	.083201
Interaction	1	73.8438	335	89.39310	.826057	.364068
Academic						
Gender	1	124.4535	334	88.91940	1.399621	.237628
'Race'	1	31.0987	334	88.91940	.349740	.554660
Interaction	1	581.3641	334	88.91940	6.538102	.011000
Social						
Gender	1	100.1749	335	83.65096	1.197534	.274601
'Race'	1	681.4782	335	83.65096	8.146687	.004583
Interaction	1	23.1059	335	83.65096	.276218	.599538
P\Emotional						
Gender	1	403.5487	335	98.15541	4.111324	.043388
'Race'	1	369.1203	335	98.15541	3.760570	.053314
Interaction	1	101.3057	335	98.15541	1.032095	.310400
Institutional						
Gender	1	271.4724	335	88.61985	3.063337	.080993
'Race'	1	178.9806	335	88.61985	2.019645	.156206
Interaction	1	14.9056	335	88.61985	.168197	.681982

Main effects:

'Race'

Analyses revealed a main effect for 'race' on the Social Adjustment subscale, with white subjects seen to be scoring significantly higher than did black subjects (F=8.15, df=1, 335, p=.005). Further revealed were tendencies for white subjects to score higher on both the Personal-Emotional Subscale (F=3.76, df=1, 335, p=.053) and Full Scale (F=3.02, df=1, 335, p=.083) than did their black counterparts.

Gender

A main effect was found for gender, in that men were seen to score significantly higher (F=4.11, df=1, 335, p=.04) on the Personal-Emotional Adjustment subscale than were women. No significant differences between men and women were observed on any of the other adjustment scales, although there appeared a tendency (F=3.06, df=1, 335, p=.08) for men to score higher than did women on the Institutional Attachment subscale.

Interaction effects:

A significant interaction between gender and 'race' was detected on the Academic Adjustment Scale (F=6.53, df=1, 334, p=.01). Post-hoc planned comparisons revealed white women to achieve significantly higher scores on this subscale than did either black women (F=4.91, df=1, 334, p=.02) or white men (F=7.53, df=1, 334, p=.006).

Hypotheses regarding other possible aspects or indicators of adjustment were then subjected to statistical analysis. The aim of the following investigations was to establish, therefore, whether relationships existed between such variables as scores on the SACQ, university academic performance, giving consideration to dropping out of university and the experience of painful events which may have compromised adjustment to university.

3.9. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ADJUSTMENT AND REPORTING HAVING FELT LIKE DROPPING OUT OF UNIVERSITY DURING THIS PAST YEAR

Table 14 presents results from an independent t-test analysis exploring the relationship between mean SACQ score and whether subjects had reported having felt like dropping out of university in the past year. Data for the latter variable were derived from responses to the question contained in the third part of the questionnaire which asked, "Was there any time this past year when you felt like dropping out of university?" Students who had responded negatively to this item scored significantly higher ($p<.05$) on the Full Scale and all four adjustment subscales than did those who had responded affirmatively.

Table 14: ***Relationship between mean SACQ scores and reporting having felt like dropping out of university***

	n	*n*	Mean	Mean	SD	SD			
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	t-val	df	p
Full Scale	232	105	48.3	41.2	9.14	8.15	6.86	335	.000
Academic	231	105	48.0	42.5	9.30	8.74	5.12	334	.000
Social	232	105	49.0	44.8	9.05	8.75	3.94	335	.000
P/Emotional	232	105	45.8	39.7	9.89	8.87	5.42	335	.000
Institutional	232	105	54.4	47.2	8.72	9.10	6.95	335	.000

3.10. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ADJUSTMENT AND UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

A Spearman Rank Order Correlation (n=330) was also conducted in the interests of exploring the relationship between SACQ score and the subjective estimate of 2nd semester academic performance. The results of the analysis, which yielded significant negative correlations ($p<.0005$) between academic performance and all five scales, are presented in Table 15. The correlations are negative, it must be noted, because of the inverse nature of the scale used to elicit responses, i.e. 75% or more = 1, 70%-75% = 2, etc.

Table 15: ***Significant Spearman Rank Order Correlation comparing scores on the five SACQ scales and subjective estimate of 2nd semester academic performance***

	Full Scale	Academic	Social	P/Emotional	Institutional
Academic performance	-.37	-.45	-.21	-.24	-.21

3.11. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN 'RACE' AND UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

An analysis was then conducted to ascertain whether the subjective estimate of 2nd semester academic performance varied according to subjects' 'race.' Table 16 presents proportions of students of different racial categories who selected each of the classes of academic performance (75%+, 70-75%, 60-69%, 50-59% or 50%-) in estimating their general academic performance over the last semester.

Table16: ***Relationship between subjective estimate of 2nd semester academic results and 'race'***

'Race'	Subjective Estimate of Academic Results						
		75% +	70-75%	60-69%	50-59%	50% or less	Total
Black	*n*	2	13	51	51	36	153
	%	1.31	8.50	33.33	33.33	23.53	
White	*n*	17	38	79	28	16	178
	%	9.55	21.35	44.38	15.73	8.99	
Total		19	51	130	79	52	331

The Pearson chi-square result, χ^2 (4) = 41.78, p<.0000001, indicating relatedness or independence of variables for the 2 x 5 table of 'race' and subjective estimate of academic performance, demonstrates a significant association between the 2 variables. Standardised residuals, in the form of Z scores calculated by subtracting expected frequency from observed frequency and dividing the outcome by the square root of the expected frequency (Hays, 1991), were then used to judge the post-hoc significance of the departure from independence in one or more of the cells. Analysis of standardised residuals indicated that significantly more white students than expected estimated an

overall academic performance of over 75% ($p<.05$) or between 70-75% ($p<.05$) and that significantly fewer black students than expected estimated these results ($p<.05$ in both instances). Furthermore, significantly more black students than expected estimated their overall academic performance as between 50-59% ($p<.01$) or below 50% ($p<.01$) and significantly fewer white students than expected estimated results in these 2 lowest categories ($p<.05$ in both cases).

3.12. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN 'RACE' AND REPORTING OF A PAINFUL EVENT OR EXPERIENCE

Subjects were required to respond to another question contained in the third section of the questionnaire, "Have there been any painful events or experiences this past year which may have affected you negatively at university? If 'yes,' please briefly describe the nature of these (e.g. divorce or death in the family, etc.)." Responses to the latter half of the item varied in nature, but typically took the form of deaths or illness of parents, family members or friends, breakups of relationships, discord or conflict in relationships or family problems, and financial stresses most often relating to home. Table 17 presents proportions of students in the two racial categories who responded negatively or affirmatively to the question.

Table 17: ***Relationship between 'race' and reporting of a painful event or experience***

'Race'	**Painful event or experience**			
		No Painful Event	Painful Event	Total
Black	*n*	81	64	145
	%	55.86	44.14	
White	*n*	131	45	176
	%	74.43	25.57	
Total		212	109	321

As the analysis took the form of a 2x2 contingency table, the results of the chi-square were amended according to Yates's correction for continuity, which has the effect of reducing the size of the chi-square, thereby decreasing the probability of a Type I error (Cramer, 1998). The corrected chi-square, χ^2 (1) = 11.41, $p<.005$, showed 'race' and reporting of a painful event or experience to be significantly related. Analysis of the post-hoc significance of dependence in the form of standardised residuals indicated that significantly more black students than expected reported having had a painful event or experience ($p<.05$) while significantly fewer white students than expected reported such an experience ($p<.05$). More specifically, odds ratios of significant cross-tabulations indicated that black students were 2.3 times as likely to have reported a painful event or experience than white students (95% confidence interval for odds ratio was 1.44 to 3.707).

3.13. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REPORTING OF A PAINFUL EVENT OR EXPERIENCE AND REPORTING HAVING FELT LIKE DROPPING OUT OF UNIVERSITY

Chi-square analysis (corrected by Yates's correction), χ^2 (1) = 5.77, $p<.05$, showed reporting a painful event or experience and having felt like dropping out of university to be significantly related. Table 18 presents proportions of students who responded negatively or affirmatively to the two questions.

Table 18: ***Relationship between reporting of a painful event or experience and having felt like dropping out of university***

Painful event	**Having felt like dropping out of university**			
		Not Dropping Out	Dropping Out	Total
No Painful Event	n	155	56	211
	%	73.46	26.54	
Painful Event	n	65	44	109
	%	59.63	40.37	
Total		220	100	320

Post-hoc significance of departure from independence within individual cells was then tested. Analysis of standardised residuals indicated that significantly more students who had reported having had a painful event or experience than expected had also reported having considered dropping out of university during the course of the year ($p<.05$).

3.14. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REPORTING OF A PAINFUL EVENT OR EXPERIENCE AND UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Finally, Table 19 outlines the relationship between a subjective estimate of 2nd semester academic results and whether subjects had reported any painful events or experiences during the past year which may have affected them negatively. Proportions of subjects per category are tabled, the results of chi-square analysis, χ^2 (4) = 15.78, $p<.005$, demonstrating a significant relationship between the 2 variables.

Table 19: ***Relationship between reporting of a 'painful event or experience' and subjective estimate of 2nd semester academic results***

Painful Event	**Subjective Estimate of Academic Results**						
		75% +	70-75%	60-69%	50-59%	50% or less	Totals
No	*n*	15	35	87	51	20	208
	%	7.21	16.83	41.83	24.52	9.62	
Yes	*n*	4	14	40	20	28	106
	%	3.77	13.21	37.74	18.87	26.42	
Total		19	49	127	71	48	314

Analysis of standardised residuals was then employed to ascertain the post-hoc significance of the departure from independence in individual cells. Results indicated that significantly more students who reported having had a painful event or experience than expected had estimated an overall academic performance of 50% or less ($p<.005$), and significantly fewer students who had not reported a painful experience than expected had reported an academic performance of less than 50% ($p<.05$).

Chapter 4 : DISCUSSION

4.1. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

A central hypothesis underlying the current study was that adjustment to university would differ as a function of 'race,' with white students scoring higher on the four dimensions (academic, social, personal-emotional, institutional attachment) of university adjustment than black students. The results yielded partial support for this hypothesis, in that white students were found to achieve significantly higher scores on Social Adjustment than did black students. This finding supports that of Adan and Felner (1995), who found the self-appraised Social Adjustment of black first year students at a predominantly white university to be less favourable than that of equivalent white students at the same institution. However, Baker (1999) notes that the most common finding in comparisons of black and white students at integrated American institutions is that of no difference in SACQ scores.

As discussed earlier, higher scores on the Social Adjustment subscale reflect a capacity for involvement in social activities and functioning, relationships with other people on campus, the ability to cope with being away from home and significant persons there, and general satisfaction with the social aspects of the university environment. The results of the present study suggest, therefore, that black students tended to be relatively less socially integrated into the university environment as well as compromised in their levels of social involvement and perceived support.

Illustrative of this finding were the following responses, taken randomly from the larger sample of responses supplied to various questions in Section 3 of the questionnaire, all of which sought to assess qualitatively various dimensions of adjustment and subjects' relationship to the UCT environment. It must be noted that the responses listed here were not obtained through any form of systematic thematic or content analysis, but rather on

the basis of a perception that statements of this kind constituted an important theme throughout those supplied by black respondents:

> *I felt lonely and could not cope with my studies. My life was awful and very boring. I slept most of the time (Black female, ECO110S, b.1979).*
>
> *(UCT) does not meet my needs, because of the lifestyle, meaning the social difficulty of adjusting to UCT. It's too far from home (Black male, ASPECT, b.1981).*
>
> *All I know about being at UCT is attending lectures, not anything else. Lectures seem to be my only link to the university (Black female, Psychology 1, b.1979).*
>
> *I am not a part because I am not in the mix and I don't even know what I'm doing here (black male, ECO110S, 1980)*
>
> *The problem is not with UCT but with me . . . Well, everyone seems so free and happy to be here except me. There's a bit more people for my liking (black female, ECO110S, 1980)*

The following answers were supplied in response to the question, "What would have made this past year at university an easier or better one for you?"

> *A friend, always encouraging me (Black female, Psychology1, b.1980)*
>
> *Having someone I can really trust to talk to / having close friends (Black, female, Psychology 1, b.1979)*
>
> *Having someone to talk to (Black female, Psychology, b.1981)*

Standard is too high, to cope, communicate and socialize with others (Black male, Aspect, b.1977)

Friendship – more especially at residences (Black female, ECO110H, b.1981)

In terms of further results, a tendency was apparent for white students to achieve relatively higher scores than black students on Personal-Emotional Adjustment, suggesting an association between 'race' and the experience of psychological and physical well-being or distress.

Of significance too in the comparison between 'races' was the absence of significant differences between white and black students on Academic Adjustment or Institutional Attachment. In the first instance, considering that in the current formulation it was hypothesised that white and black students were still likely in some instances to enter university with differing levels of scholastic preparedness, it may have been expected that black students fared poorly relative to white students on Academic Adjustment. This appeared not to be the case. The result is important, nevertheless, when considering the finding, to follow, that black subjects reported a significantly greater proportion of "poorer" results and white subjects a significantly greater proportion of "stronger" results than expected. This discrepancy between perceived academic coping and performance (if the subjective estimate could indeed be considered an accurate assessment of the latter) requires, it is argued, further exploration of the role played by such factors as academic striving, confidence and expectations in the academic pursuits of black students.

In the second instance, in light of previous research into the experiences of black students at UCT, it may have been expected that black students would have evidenced lower scores than obtained by white students on Institutional Attachment, therein reflecting the poorer level of attachment or affiliation to the university hypothesised in the present study. Although this hypothesis appeared to be rendered invalid by the current data, it is nevertheless possible that as this subscale in part measures commitment to general educational goals, the degree to which black students may have felt any measure less

institutional commitment to UCT in particular may have been nullified by a manifest allegiance to the student role or pursuit of career-oriented goals.

With regard to the relationship between 'race' and course and the various dimensions of adjustment, the only significant difference between black and white students within a particular course was that of the ECO111S course, in which it was found that white students scored significantly higher than did black students on Social Adjustment (therein supporting the main finding above), as well as on Institutional Attachment. With regard to students of the same 'race' but sampled from different courses, black subjects in the Aspect class performed significantly better on Full Scale Adjustment, Academic Adjustment and Personal-Emotional Adjustment (with a tendency to score higher on Institutional Attachment as well) than did black students in either ECO110S or ECO110H (i.e. the courses incorporating either students who had failed their 1st semester Economics 1 course or those undertaking the course over a full year). Of interest was the absence of any significant difference in performance on Social Adjustment between black students in any of the courses, suggesting that the relative difficulty experienced in this domain of adjustment may be a phenomenon more uniformly distributed among the black first-year student population.

It is notable that the Aspect class, in contrast to the other classes sampled, was characterised on one level by its having a majority of black students, despite the fact that students of other 'races' (e.g. "Coloured") were also registered for the programme. Hence, consideration must be given to the potentially positive effects of relative cultural homogeneity on the adjustment indices of students in this group. Such a phenomenon may be implicated too in the finding that black subjects in Aspect scored higher on Institutional Attachment than did black subjects in the other four courses sampled (significantly in the case of ECO111S). Further research would thus be useful in deepening understanding of factors relating to differential levels of adjustment for students enrolled in such a programme.

Lastly, it was found also that black students in Psychology 1 scored significantly higher on Academic Adjustment than did their counterparts in either ECO110S or ECO110H. Furthermore, in terms of white students, those in ECO111S were found to score significantly better than those in ECO110S on all dimensions of adjustment, and significantly higher than those in Psychology 1 and ECO110H on assorted dimensions.

In terms of related findings, it must be noted that previous research into inter-faculty variation in performance on the SACQ is limited, with only a single study (Scott, 1991, in Baker, 1999) examining the effects of registration in different disciplines, though apparently without utilising 'race' as a co-determinant. There exists, however, an abundance of research into the effects of programmes designed to facilitate enhanced adjustment to university in students prior to and post-matriculation. The findings relating to the impact of such orientation and peer-support programmes, however, are varied (see Baker, 1999) and the nature of the programmes themselves moreover so diverse as to defy attempts at meaningful comparisons with similarly-intended programmes (e.g. Aspect) investigated in the current study.

Gender was found to relate significantly to variability in adjustment scores on only one of the four dimensions, namely Personal-Emotional Adjustment, on which male subjects were found to score significantly higher than female subjects. This finding is consistent with results obtained in the normative sample (Baker & Siryk, 1989) as well as in several recent investigations (Baker, 1999). A possible explanation for this finding, put forward here as a tentative hypothesis, may be the existence of a greater tendency for revealing personal distress or psychological morbidity in female subjects than in males. A further finding, emerging out of the combined analysis of the effects of gender and 'race,' was that white female students scored significantly higher than did either black females or white males on Academic Adjustment.

The findings showed adjustment to university to vary in accordance with certain other socio-demographic variables investigated. Age was found to be related to only one of the four dimensions of adjustment, namely Academic Adjustment, with 'older' students

recording significantly higher scores on this subscale than did 'younger' students. It appeared, therefore, that 'older' students perceived greater success in coping with the various educational demands inherent in the university environment, a finding which could be understood either in terms of such students exercising more maturity, discipline and self-responsibility in pursuing their academic goals, or alternatively displaying a greater investment in believing themselves to be coping academically. The finding must, however, be located within a context of mixed findings regarding the effect of age on SACQ scores which have been reported by other studies assessing exclusively first-year populations (Baker, 1999).

First-language was found to be related to SACQ score on only the Social Adjustment subscale, in that subjects whose first-language constituted an African language were seen to report poorer social adjustment than did first-language English-speakers. This finding is interesting in that it may have been expected that of all the dimensions of adjustment on which language difficulties could manifest themselves, academic adjustment (and perhaps identification with UCT) would have perhaps been the most prominent. Yet the result is consistent with that dealing with the relationship between adjustment and 'race,' and suggests either that the current analysis was not discriminating enough to yield as full an account of potential maladjustment due to linguistic diversity as explored in Kapp (1998), for instance, or alternatively that the implications of second- or third-language English usage for social adjustment on campus at UCT are indeed particularly significant.

In terms of the impact on adjustment of studying away from home, no significant differences were found between subjects citing Cape Town and those citing elsewhere as their place of origin. Similarly, no significant differences on any of the four dimensions of adjustment were found between subjects reporting having had some exposure to multiracial schooling and those who reported not. This is inconsistent with research which found that for black students at predominantly white universities, greater amounts of prior interracial experience in the high-school context was indeed associated with better adjustment, as manifested in higher SACQ scores (Adan & Felner, 1995).

In terms of the examination of other factors hypothesised to be related to university adjustment, it was found that students who had reported considering dropping out of university in the past year scored significantly lower on all adjustment dimensions than did those who indicated they had not. It was found too that significantly more students who reported having had a painful event or experience over the past year than expected had reported having considered dropping out of university during the course of the year. Important in this regard was the finding that black students were 2.3 times likelier to have reported a painful event or experience than were white students.

Subjectively-assessed academic performance was found also to be significantly related to whether students had reported having had a painful event or experience in the past year. Significantly more students who acknowledged a painful event than expected had estimated an overall academic performance of 50% or less, and significantly fewer students who had not reported a painful experience than expected had reported an academic performance of less than 50%. Another factor found to be related to subjective academic performance was 'race.' Black and white students' respective estimations of their overall semester results appeared to constitute something of an inverse image of the other, with black students' performances tending disproportionately and significantly towards the bottom two categories and white students' results disproportionately and significantly towards the top two categories. Lastly, subjective academic performance was found to be significantly negatively correlated with all adjustment scales, the highest correlation appropriately being that with Academic Adjustment.

4.2. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

While not necessarily a limitation, it must be noted that this study constituted a preliminary inquiry, the aim of which was to present a broad overview of factors found to relate to adjustment among the UCT first-year student population. As such its results are perhaps most usefully considered as indicators of the direction needed to be taken by further research in the area. It is necessary too that the correlative nature of the study, which sought primarily to establish whether relationships existed between variables of

interest, be borne in mind. As the research design does not permit the direct attribution of causality in understanding the relationships between variables, extra caution must be taken when interpreting the results. This applies equally in regard to the fact that in the study no systematic attempts were made to control for the possible effects of third variables (i.e. other than those directly under investigation) on outcomes.

Another important consideration lies in the fact that the SACQ, which forms a considerable basis of the present study, has not been normed on a local population, and may thus be compromised in its validity-claims with regard to the current research. Furthermore, as is the case with all such research, the findings from this study may not be generalisable to other students at UCT or indeed to those attending similarly historically white universities in South Africa. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the sample represented as inclusive a cross-section of the general first-year student population at UCT as was possible under the circumstances, ensuring that it is unlikely that the results are entirely specific to the sample of students participating in the study.

A possible and notable exception to this state of affairs resides in the case of comparisons made between students sampled across the three faculties and in different courses of study. It is possible, in the first instance, that students drawn from the faculties of Humanities and Engineering respectively may differ significantly in their attitudes, perceptions, interactions or life experiences. They may thus be differently predisposed to relative success or difficulty in assuming the specific developmental tasks required in adjusting to university, whether this be in the spheres of adapting socially, emotionally or even academically.

Secondly, perhaps an even worthier concern is that of subjects' performance on a scale such as Academic Adjustment being influenced by differing degrees of academic preparedness or competence in students registered for different courses. Although a central assumption in the current study is that concerned with the inter-relatedness of different dimensions of adjustment, it must be acknowledged that mean academic ability may indeed vary between a group of students who have mostly passed a first-semester

Economics course, a group who failed and are repeating the course and a group undertaking the course over a full year as part of an extended curriculum. Nevertheless, an appraisal of the entrance criteria of the respective courses sampled would demonstrate a rough degree of equivalence unlikely to confound considerably efforts at measuring the variables under study. The exception to this was the evident 5-point discrepancy between the number of Matric points required for entry into the Aspect and ECO110H programmes respectively.

It must be noted too that a response bias may exist in the possibility that ethnicity or 'race' influenced subjects' willingness to self-disclose on certain items. This may have particularly been the case with regard to items such as those requiring the disclosure of a painful event or experience during the year. Thorough perusal of responses to items eliciting qualitative responses in the third section of the questionnaire, however, suggested a uniform tendency to self-disclosure across demographic variables. Finally, a limitation may exist in the possibility that due to the data collection occurring during the last month of formal lecturing prior to the onset of examinations, subjects' self-appraisal of their adjustment and, in particular, academic coping may have been skewed downwards by such stress and apprehension as may typically characterise this period of the academic year.

4.3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The central hypothesis of this study related to the question of how different sectors of the student community at UCT experience and interact with the university environment in different ways. Specifically, it proposed on the basis of previous research that although adjustment difficulties are likely to be a normative experience for those in their first year of university life, black first-year students encountered particular difficulty in adjusting to life at UCT. Furthermore, a model of adjustment to university was proposed in which adjustment encompassed a range of potential experiences situated along particular and, to some extent, mutually-dependent dimensions. One important dimension, it was argued, constituted students' perceptions of their relationship to the campus environment, which

functioned among other things to mediate the relationship between academic-social-emotional potential and outcome. If students felt recognised and valued by their institution (i.e. optimising the "perceived fit" between student and environment), this would be instrumental in facilitating a sense of legitimate access to resources – both learning and coping, and in leading to a heightened capacity to develop and achieve fully.

The findings yielded no evidence that black students, in comparison to their white counterparts, differed in their perceptions of the university environment or indeed in their degree of attachment to UCT. However, the finding that black students sampled reported themselves to be significantly less socially (and possibly emotionally) adjusted than did their white counterparts did suggest a poorer congruence between black subjects and the university environment than existed for white subjects. In other words, that black students were found to cope less effectively with the social and interpersonal demands inherent in the university experience was seen to point to a disjuncture between these students' experiences and the university's undertaking to facilitate access to and provision of a positive institutional environment. Such an environment would need to be one in which the experience of all students was validated, necessitating the promotion and provision of additional access to help structures, coping resources and supports (Gelman, 1999; Tomlinson-Clarke, 1998) to those for whom the de-emphasis of social adjustment within institutional culture at UCT had been detrimental.

These results lend themselves to a further interpretation. It is possible that black students' poorer scores with regard to social and emotional adjustment – in conjunction with indices of institutional commitment on a par with white students, may have related to a tendency to personalise any process of struggling to adjust to UCT which they may have been experiencing. In other words, a different kind of institutional denial and alienation may have been operating in terms of which black students were indeed experiencing difficulties in perceiving themselves to be "fitting in" or coping at UCT, but were predisposed to assume such problems were their own making, as opposed to being the responsibility of the university too.

Within the context of the study it is of course unclear whether black subjects' difficulties in adapting socially were due to such students possessing fewer social support structures, their possibly experiencing greater difficulty in dealing with social relocation and being far away from home or perhaps even a tendency for formerly-disadvantaged students to prioritise academic functioning over social development. Nevertheless, if the cumulative effect of social or interpersonal maladjustment were to serve to complicate to any degree an already-challenging developmental process, it would point to the necessity for the creation of appropriate orientation or peer mentoring programmes which would not only address the real need for assisting students in the tasks of adjusting socially, but would also enhance a sense of value and of legitimacy with regard to the needs of this sector of students. In this regard, it is significant to note that a pilot peer-based student mentoring programme at UWC was deemed to offer a "powerful supportive social environment for students" (Kagee et al, 1997, p. 257).

The finding that black and white subjects perceived themselves to be equally academically adjusted (though differing in academic outcomes) is significant too, particularly in light of the common perception that a lack of academic integration lies at the root of many black students' difficulty in functioning at universities in South Africa. It suggests either that a more complex understanding is required of the relationship between academic expectation and outcome on the part of black students, or that the process of adjusting to university for these students is indeed a multifaceted one, in which such factors as psychosocial functioning and comfort play as crucial a role as academic factors in determining students' success or failure in coping with the demands inherent in the university environment. Apart from confirming the importance, therefore, of creating a social and academic environment in which the holistic development of students (and not merely their academic performance) may be fostered, the findings demonstrate elsewhere too that a significant relationship exists between academic functioning, as defined by performance at the university, and the other dimensions of adjustment as measured by the SACQ. This further highlights the impact that interpersonal, emotional and institutional factors have on the ability of students to achieve academically.

Though confounded by possible discrepancies in entrance criteria, the findings also suggest tentative evidence that features of the Aspect programme may be beneficial to students in contributing to better adjustment. As a form of "academic support programme," students in this programme demonstrated significantly higher indices of adjustment than did students in either the supported academic stream of Economics 1 or the group repeating the 1st semester course in this field. It must be noted that the students in ECO110H and ECO110S also appeared more poorly adjusted on all SACQ dimensions than did those in ECO111S. Yet, students in the two lower Economics streams may have been compromised in their adjustment due to a host of possible reasons (including that of "struggling academically"), and research into the nature of their maladjustment is certain to yield valuable information regarding the relationship between academic performance or status and perceptions of oneself, others and the university environment. Accordingly, it is suggested that further research be undertaken into the potentially beneficial effects of such practices as staff- or peer-mentoring, individualised attention and support, destigmatisation of courses and the creation of stronger class-identities.

The study provides some further useful insights into the relationship between certain dimensions and determinants of university adjustment, and a few tentative conclusions may be drawn from the findings. The significant relationship between painful events or experiences and poorer academic performances as well as considering dropping out of university must be examined in light of the further finding that black students were more likely to report such painful experiences than were white students. Whether this finding was indicative of such students tending more to report such painful experiences, or of their actually experiencing more of these constitutes, it is suggested, an important direction for future research. Furthermore, if the immediate university environment is to play a meaningful and empathic role in mediating the impact of external events which may have detrimental effects on students' adjustment, there are implications once again for what might entail appropriate provision on the part of UCT, particularly as painful events and experiences may play a greater role in the lives of black students than in the case of others.

In conclusion, if a university is to provide its students with the personal, social, and academic support that will assist them in their adjustment to university, then it ought to give equal consideration to the environmental determinants of adjustment as to those arising from the individual's own background and life circumstances. In the context of this study, the question could arise as to whether UCT responds to its diverse student body in such a way as to assist its members in succeeding, or whether the university is instead experienced as an alienating and unsupportive place for young people to begin their adult lives.

The current assessment of just a few dimensions of adjustment as were found to operate among a few sectors of the UCT student population and, in particular, the first-year black student population, goes some way, it is suggested, to begin to explore this question. The employment of qualitative measures, such as in-depth interviews, may in this regard provide yet deeper insight into student experiences and perceptions relating to difficult adjustment at UCT. It is crucial, in any regard, that further research be undertaken which would assist the institution in identifying critical areas in which to effect meaningful change, and in raising the "conscious awareness of university administrators such that a greater willingness to understand the impact of institutional culture is promoted" (Harris, 1995, p.43).

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APPENDIX 1

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Student Health Service

PROTEM · Bungalow No. 7 · Show Road
Rondebosch 7700
Telephones: 6503662 · 6503000

September 1999

Dear Student

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. It forms part of a research project. We hope that the results of the project will help the Student Health Service to better assist students in their adjustment to university.

You do not need to write your name on the questionnaire, and your answers will remain completely anonymous and confidential.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Justin Sennett
Intern Clinical Psychologist

Rosanna Strauss
Principal Clinical Psychologist

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ACCURATELY AND HONESTLY

SECTION 1:-

Please tick the appropriate category or fill in the answer where space is provided

1. Are you male or female?

Male	Female

2. What 'race' are you? *

Black	White
Coloured	Indian
Other	

3. What is your date of birth? yy___ /mm___ /dd___

4. How long have you been at UCT? .....

5. What year of your studies are you in? .....year

6. What degree are you registered for? .....

7. On average, what have most of your results at UCT been this semester?

75% or more	50-59%
70-75%	50% or less
60-69%	

8. Where do you come from (e.g. where you brought up)? (Town).....

(Province).....

* *This question is included for the sole purpose of helping provide the best possible services at Student Health. Its inclusion does not imply an acceptance of political categories of identity.*

Please turn over .....

9. What do you consider to be your: First language _____

Second language _____

10. What type of school did you attend?
(please tick as many as appropriate)

Government	Multiracial	Co-ed
Private	Single race	Single sex

11. What were your parents' highest levels of education?

LEVEL	Mother	Father
Primary school		
Some high schooling		
Completed high school		
Some post-secondary education (e.g. univ.)		
Graduated with Diploma		
Graduated with Degree		

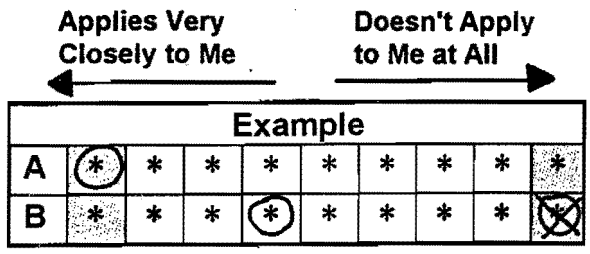
12. Could you estimate your family's monthly income?

Below R1000	R2500 - R5000
R1000 - R2500	Over R5000

SECTION 2:-

The 67 statements on the next 2 pages describe university experiences. Read each one and describe how well it applies to you at the present time (within the past few days). For each statement, circle the asterisk (*) at the point in the continuum that best represents how closely the statement applies to you. Circle only one asterisk for each statement. To change an answer, draw an X through the incorrect response and circle the desired response. Do not erase any responses.

Example: In the example on the right, this person feels that Item A applies very closely to him or her, and Item B was changed from "doesn't apply at all" to "applies somewhat."



Please turn over .....

	Applies Very Closely to Me ←								Doesn't Apply to Me at All →
1. I feel that I fit in well as part of the university environment.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
2. I have been feeling tense or nervous lately.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
3. I have been keeping up to date with my academic work.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
4. I am meeting as many people, and making as many friends as I would like at university.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
5. I know why I'm at university and what I want out of it.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
6. I am finding academic work at university difficult.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
7. Lately I have been feeling down and moody a lot.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
8. I am very involved with social activities at university.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
9. I am adjusting well to university.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
10. I have not been coping well during exams.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
11. I have felt tired much of the time lately.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
12. Standing on my own feet, taking responsibility for myself, has not been easy.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
13. I am satisfied with the level at which I am performing academically.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
14. I have had informal, personal contacts with university lecturers.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
15. I am pleased now about my decision to go to university.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
16. I am pleased now about my decision to attend this university in particular.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
17. I'm not working as hard as I should at my course work.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
18. I have several people I feel close to at university.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
19. My academic goals are well defined.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
20. I haven't been able to control my emotions very well lately.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
21. I'm not really clever enough for the academic work I am expected to be doing now.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
22. Homesickness or missing home is a source of difficulty for me now.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
23. Getting a university degree is very important to me.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
24. My appetite has been good lately.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
25. I haven't been very efficient in the use of study time lately.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
26. I enjoy living in a university residence. (Please leave this out if you do not live in a residence; any university housing should be regarded as a residence.)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
27. I enjoy writing essays or papers for courses.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
28. I have been having a lot of headaches lately.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
29. I really haven't had much motivation for studying lately.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
30. I am satisfied with the extracurricular activities available at university.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
31. I've given a lot of thought lately to whether I should ask for help from the Psychologist/Counselling Services at Student Health or from a psychologist outside university.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
32. Lately I have been having doubts regarding the value of a university education.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
33. I am getting along very well with my roommate(s)/housemate(s) at university. (Please leave this out if you do not have a roommate.)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
34. I wish I were at another university.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Please turn over .....

	Applies Very Closely to Me								Doesn't Apply to Me at All
35. I've put on (or lost) too much weight recently.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
36. I am satisfied with the number and variety of courses available at university.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
37. I feel that I have enough social skills to get along well in the university setting.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
38. I have been getting angry too easily lately.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
39. Recently I have had trouble concentrating in lectures or when I try to study.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
40. I haven't been sleeping very well.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
41. I'm not doing well enough academically for the amount of work I put in.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
42. I am having difficulty feeling at ease with other people at university.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
43. I am satisfied with the quality of the courses available at university.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
44. I am attending lectures regularly.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
45. Sometimes my thinking gets muddled up too easily.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
46. I am satisfied with the extent to which I am participating in social activities at university.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
47. I expect to stay at this university for a bachelor's degree.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
48. I haven't been mixing too well with the opposite sex lately.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
49. I worry a lot about my university expenses.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
50. I am enjoying my academic work at university.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
51. I have been feeling lonely a lot at university lately.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
52. I am having a lot of trouble getting started on university assignments.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
53. I feel I have good control over my life situation at university.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
54. I am satisfied with my programme of courses for this semester.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
55. I have been feeling in good health lately.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
56. I feel I am very different from other students at university in ways that I don't like.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
57. On balance, I would rather be home than here.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
58. Most of the things I am interested in are not related to any of my course work at university.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
59. Lately I have been thinking about transferring to another university or technicon.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
60. Lately I have been thinking about dropping out of university altogether and for good.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
61. I find myself giving considerable thought to taking time off from university and finishing later.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
62. I am very satisfied with the lecturers I have now in my courses.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
63. I have some good friends or acquaintances at university with whom I can talk about any problems I may have.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
64. I am experiencing a lot of difficulty coping with the stresses imposed upon me at university.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
65. I am quite satisfied with my social life at university.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
66. I'm quite satisfied with my academic situation at university.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
67. I feel confident that I will be able to deal in a satisfactory manner with future challenges here at university.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Please turn over .....

SECTION 3:-

Please tick the appropriate category and write brief answers in the spaces provided

1. Was there any time this past year when you felt like dropping out of university?

Yes	No

If "yes," please say why this is so.

_____

_____

_____

2. Many students find that university is very different to previous environments in their lives. What would you consider to have been the 3 most important changes you've had to cope with in your adjustment from last year to this year at university?

i.)_____

ii.)_____

iii.)_____

3. Could you briefly describe how UCT does or does not meet your needs. Please describe your feelings about this as honestly as possible.

_____

_____

_____

4. How much do you feel a part of the UCT community?

A	B	C
Very much part of	Somewhat part of	Not at all part of

If you marked either of the responses **B** or **C**, could you please provide reasons.

_____

_____

_____

Please turn over .....

5. Do you feel there is such a thing as a UCT "culture?" If so, how would you describe this "culture?"

6. What aspects of / parts of life at UCT do you think you will never get used to?

7. What would have made this past year at university an easier or better one for you?

8. Have there been any painful events or experiences this past year which may have affected you negatively at university?

Yes	No

If "yes," please briefly describe the nature of these (e.g. divorce or death in the family, etc.)

9. Have there been times this year when you've had the feeling that your brain is "tired?"

Yes	No

If "yes," please explain why you think you are feeling this way.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP AND CO-OPERATION!

APPENDIX 2

COURSE DETAILS

PSY101W (Psychology 1)

Students required 36 (unweighted) points on the UCT Faculty of Humanities system to qualify for admission to Psychology 1. Instruction was conducted in the form of 4 lectures weekly with no tutorial supplementation.

ECO111S (Macroeconomics)

A first-year second semester course in macroeconomics for students who had obtained a minimum mark of 45% in the final examinations for the first semester course ECO110F (Microeconomics). The entrance criterion for the latter course was 33 unweighted matric points on the Faculty of Humanities rating system or 43 points with double-weighting for English and mathematics on the Faculty of Commerce rating system. Tuition occurred in the form of 4 lectures and 1 tutorial or workshop per week.

ECO110S (Microeconomics)

A first-year second semester course in microeconomics for students mostly who had failed the first semester course (ECO110F) and were repeating the course. A few students (from the Faculty of Engineering) were enrolled in this course for the first time. Tuition was carried out in the form of 4 weekly lectures and 1 tutorial or workshop per week.

ECO110H (Microeconomics Extended)

A whole-year half-course version of the above semesterised microeconomics course (ECO110F/S) in which students were enrolled with the intention of undertaking a Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com) degree of four years duration instead of three. Students were drawn from Faculty of Humanities candidates who had not met the entrance criteria for ECO110F or alternatively had enough points but did not have an adequate Matric mathematics grade, and Special Admissions students who had not met the criterion of 43

Matric points (English and mathematics double-weighted) necessary for entry on the Faculty of Commerce rating system. Students in the Commerce group were generally of previously disadvantaged educational backgrounds with not enough entry points for mainstream B.Com studies. Thus, if such students had obtained between 38 and 42 points, a Matric mathematics mark not lower than a specified level and had come from disadvantaged educational institutions, they were eligible for entry into the Special Admissions Programme.

The mode of tuition in this course consisted mostly of lecturing in the form of four lectures and 1 double-period tutorial per week. Lecturing was conducted by a single lecturer who remained with the class for the duration of the year and taught the entire syllabus. Students were known to the lecturer on a first-name basis, resulting in some measure of intimacy, personalised attention and the opportunity for class discussion, the experience of which was pronounced by students to be distinct from the alienation an anonymity characteristic of some of the other larger classes to which they had been exposed. Students however received no individual mentoring in the course.

ASPECT

Students were eligible for inclusion in Aspect if they received 43 points on the Faculty of Engineering system with D symbols for Matric mathematics and science (double-weighted). Alternatively, students could potentially gain entry on the basis of their performance on the UCT Alternative Admissions Test, if they received an E symbol for Matric science or in cases where they had in fact scored above the requisite number of points, but were required to enter Aspect as a condition of their sponsorship/bursary arrangements. In contrast, the criterion for entry into mainstream (non-Aspect) first-year studies in Engineering was 50 points (C's for Matric mathematics and science) for immediate entry, 45-49 points for likely admission and 40-44 for waitlisting, respectively (criteria for Chemical Engineering being the exception, requiring a further five points more than in other Engineering disciplines).

Students in Aspect shared 2 out of 3 lectures with the mainstream group of Engineering first-years, but received separate tuition (in their own home-room) in the mathematics component of the course. Students also received exclusive input in communication skills and attended a single weekly 'back-up' workshop in physics. In addition, students in the Aspect programme were encouraged to utililse formal 'mentor meetings' with staff members three of four times per year. Such meetings were conducted on a one-to-one and open-door basis and, though erratic in their frequency, were utilised significantly by students for both academic and personal concerns. A less formal peer mentoring system, in terms of which students were allocated to senior students as mentees, appeared to be less satisfactorily utilised.